

BEST MERCHANDISE OR A CLEAR DISCOVERY OF

The evident *difference*, and admirable *advantage*, betwene our traffike with *God*, for the true treasure; and with *men*, for temporall commodity.

WHEREIN IS SHEWED

That our spirituall trading is both free from all the evil, & full of all the good, which is incident to civill commerce; yea, that it overfloweth with divers excellent prerogatives, which the *affaires* of the earth cannot yeelde.

Preached at *Middleburgh* in *Zeeland*, immediately before the remoovall, of the famous fellowship of *Merchant Adventurers* of *England*, from thence, unto *Delft*, in *Holland*.

And now published, and dedicated, to the honour and use, of that whole society, there, or other where, residing.

By *JOHN VVING*, a true harted wellwiller, to their temporall, and eternall good, with *God* and *men*.

Pro. 23. 23. Buy the truth, but sell it not.

AT FLVSHING.

Printed by *Martin Abraham vander Nock*, dwelling at the sign of the *Printing house*, 1622.

SOCIETAS ADVENTVRARIA

(ANAGRAMMA.)

RE-RATA VIVIS DEO SANCTA



What er'e can be concluded from a NAME
Yours doth conclude: all happines and fame.

Ther spel'd, *that* anagram'd, is boade's your Fate,
Then which, there cannot be, a happier State,
With MEN, t'enjoy your *reconfirmed* GLORIE;
And with your GOD to be reputed HOLIE.

What can I wish, but THESE, with all increase?
And after THESE, those joyes that never cease;

TO THE

Right Worshipfull, & my worthy freinds

Master EDWARD BENNET, Deputy, the

Assistance and Generality of the famous Fel-

lowship of Merchant Adventurers of

England, residents at Delft

in Hollandt.

JOHN WING, wisheth all *Temporall,*
Spirituall, and *Eternall* happines, here,
 and in heaven.



Am bolde, (beloved, and much respected in the Lord) to send this demonstration of my dearest affection after you; not, that that I account it any *competent recompence*, but that you will (as I hope) receive it as some *greatfull remembrance* of those your greater favours, which you have soe kindly communicated vnto me. Some *tasse heretof*, you had while I was soe happy as to speake (now and then) in your hearing, and because that was *but a tasse*, (yet well favoured of such as heard the same) I could not deny, or discourage, the Christian desire of any, who were affected to feede more fully *thereupon*, It was the *last message* that I delivered among you from God; and therefore, inasmuch as you were vpon your *immediate* remoovall, to attayne a more happy course of commerce with men, I thought it my part and duty (therein) to doe my *best*, for the furtherance of your most happy traffike with the Lord; that you might

EPISTLE DEDICATORIE.

might (if *any* possibility) I might helpe be prosperous both in heaven and earth at once, and grow abundantly rich, in body *temporally*, and in soule, and body, eternally together. And God, who is Lord over all, and rich vnto all, grant, that you may enjoy this double blessednes, to the greatest prayse of his most glorious name, and the everlasting peace, and welfare, of your owne hearts and states, for ever before him. To his grace and love, I commend you all for ever, and to you all, (and to your loue,) I commend this my poore endeavour; nothing doubting, (yet earnestly desiring,) your kinde acceptance of the same, from him, who resolvethe ever to remayne.

Yours, in all vnfeyned affection
for good,

JOHN WING.

From my house in Flushing.

Marib, 26. 1622.



The summe of the Sermons.

God will compare his Kingdome to your trade.
 You could have you (Archduke) like his Kingdome made.
 If you be, surely if you doe endeavour,
 Both rich and blessed shall you be for ever.
 For why? all things must finally doe combine
 To raise rare profit by Commerce divine.
 To standeth wholly of advantages.
 There is no feare of losse, or damage.
 Adventurers, Sales, Exchanges, Barter, Debts
 will all secure all your all nothing fails.
 The Adventurer's nothing it's by th' almighty hand
 Who for your safety, by himself hath bound.
 That manure, sin, and all the devills in hell
 your soules estate, for ever shall be well.
 Your Sales are happy; of your sin that's bought
 And what's better, for the grace, Christ bought.
 And see you make most rich Returnes,
 To give the best, for worst, God doth in place.
 The Exchange, is gainfull, yet grace for grace.
 Less bringeth more, yet grace for grace.
 The more (in occasion) we deliver.
 The more we doe receive, from this free giver.
 No desperate Debts, or Bankrupts in this trade,
 God is the Creditor; Christ Surety made.
 And by th' have bound themselves to pay to us.
 The principall, with gracious overplus
 Nor made you doubt, Bad Servants should deserve.
 You lay out all your self, and all receive.
 There is no trusting other agents here.
 Each man, his owne eternall state shall beare.
 And if to th' reckoning day we wisely looke
 When our great Master will peruse his booke.
 Th' account will rise most happy to our share
 That sweetest voyce, with pleasant haire we heare
 Come faithfull servant, take your master's pay
 To posse eternall blisse, without any
 Use here, is best use for such, true trust.

For some few cares and paynes, by without measure
Glory for graife, eternitie for ages,
For little works, sumerall, endles wages.
My soule doth wish you were such Merchants all,
That he who to himself, his owne will call,
May iake you all, vnto that blisse above you
Next unto Him, (and his Vice-roy) I loue you.

The methode of the whole matter.

The Excellency of the best merchandise, doth appear, in the consideration of 3. things.

FIRST, that it is *free* from all the *evils* of ciuill trade, there being in it.

No Adventure.

No Debt.

No Bad Seruants.

SECONDLY, that it is *full* of all the *good*, that ciuill trade hath: for therein we *see* ever

Good Sales.

Best Bartars.

Excellent Exchange.

THIRDLY: that it *overfloweth* with much more good, then is to be found, in mans commerce, because

All our busines is

in one place,

with one party,

for one commodity,

All is *given* vs which we deale for.

All we deale for, is exceeding good, without any *evill*.

Our *greatest* good commeth when we have *done* trading.

The best Merchandise.
OR,
Tradeing for the true Treasure.
WHEREIN

The excellent *difference*, and admirable *advantage*,
that is betweene *spirituall*, and *temporall*
traffique, is clearely layd open, and
discovered.

In certaine Sermons on *Pro. 3. 14. 15.*

14. *For the merchandise thereof, is better then the
merchandise of silver, and the gayne thereof, is
better then fine golde.*
15. *She is more precious then rubies: and all the
things thou canst desire, are not to be compared
to her.*



I readily appeareth to every vnder-
standing reader, that *these* words doe
contayne an evident reason of that
which is avouched in *those* that goe
next before them in the 13. verse.
In which *verse*, we heare the spirit of
God magnifying (and that with his *owne* mouth that
cannot *lye*) the most happy blessednes and welbeing
of *that man*, who hath attayned true wisdom and vn-
der

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derstanding. [*Happy (or blessed) is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding*]

Now, what is *propounded* in those words, is *proved* in these, the *proposition* is in that 13. verse, the *confirmation* in this 14. & the 15. the thing that is made *knowne* there, is made *good*, here.

It is Gods manner to *satisfy* and *confirm*, what he doth *reueale* vnto vs. It cannot be doubted but that *one word* of his mouth, were enough to satisfy a *million* of *worldes*, howbeit he will not only *say* a thing but he will also *shew* the same to vs, and make it plaine, that his words are agreeable to *reason*. And that this may be apparant, it is his good pleasure *sometimes* to borrow his evidence from *our* affaires, & those things that are *familiar* with vs here *below*, either in our *naturall*, or *civill* estate. We must confesse it to be *much* favour, that he will afford vs *any* confirmation of what he affirms, seing his word *alone* is soe worthy to beleeued. But his kindnes doth much more excell, when he will cleare his truth by such *assurance*, as we may most *easily* apprehend, and *rightly* vnderstand, according to the light of that reason which we have in our owne ordinary busines. Nothing is more sure, then that the *mysteries* of his kingdome doe infinitely surpass all humane reach and capacity, and are *too wonderful* for vs to know, we may much sooner be *amazed* at them, then *acquainted* with them. The *well* is deepe (yea *bottomlesse*) and we have nothing to draw with. Howbeit, the Lord *send's* vs *buckets*, and *sends* vs to such things as may enable vs (in some measure) to see & search them out, that we may beholde these *secret* things with *open face*, shyning vpon vs, & shaddowed to vs, in such particulars wherof we are more capable and

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and apprehensue.

Sometimes, the Lord send's vs to search out his truth, in the *creatures* that are either, *aboue*, *about*, or *below* vs, *the heavens*, *the earth*, and all things *betweene* both, shall teach vs.

Sometimes, he send's vs to our *selues*, and will have vs goe no further then *home* to learne; our owne estate of *body*, and *soule*, shalbe our instructor, and arguments grounded vpon what we *see*, what we *feele*, & what we *finde*, & vnderstand in our selves *inwardly*, *outwardly*, or *both wayes naturally*, shall *vnfolde* some heavenly lesson to vs.

And sometimes our *ciuill* profession shall perswade vs of some *spirituall* assertion; God will argue with vs from our *traffike*, and commerce with men, and those *celestiall* and diuine passages which are betweene him and vs, shalbe enlightened and enlarged, by those *temporall* matters, that fall out betweene *vs* and *others*; our *earthly busines* shall further our *heavenly blessednes*, in the things that belong to the eternall benefit of our *soules* and *bodies*.

This singular and sweete variety of manifestation of Gods truth vnto vs, doth evince *both* the *unspeakable* abundance of our *blindnes*; and *infidelity*, (showing that we haue no ability of our owne to see, or to asseut, to the holy sayings of God) and that *inconceivable* grace of *his*, which doth superabound, in tendering these apparant declarations of them vnto vs; where vpon if we fasten not, our *ignorance*, and *unbelief*, will grow *utterly* inexcusable, and our state *desperately* incurable before the Lord, by them *both*.

We may now see with shame enough, what *inherent* grace is *natiuely* in vs, (wherin some haue soe *grossely* gloried)

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gloried) what vnderstanding and beleeuing harts we have, when *such* a point as this must be proved to vs, and that, we doe not *know* nor can *beleene*, that he that getteth true *wisdom*, is a happier man, then he that attayneth temporary *wealib*, though *God* speake it, vnlesse also he give vs a *reason* for it. But hoping that (*now*) we see cause to *blame* our selves throughly, and *blesse* him vnfaignedly: come we to consider of the reason here given vs of *God*, and lying in the words that we have read, [*For the merchandise thereof is better &c.*]

Which words containyng a manifest reaso to settle vs in the truth of that mans *benediction*, who hath gotten any *spirituall* riches, aboue *hi*, that is stored with all *temporall*: doe shew themselves to be a *ratiſication*, arising from our *euill* profession, and it seemeth to be framed and intended by the wisdom of *God*, as if in others words he had spoken *thus*.

The world thinks that man well, & accounts him happy, who hath gotten great store of silver, golde, pearle, and precious stones: he is a blessed man who hath abundance of wealib; especially, if it hath bene attained by payne, diligence, industry and providence in some lawfull and honorable employment (because it may fall vpon fooles by succession, deede of gift, legacy, or the like) he is the man that goe: currant among men for one in good case, that neede care for nothing, nor feare any thing.

Now saye's *God*, if he be soe *happy*, and soe *high* in your estimation, that hath thus risen to a *great estate* in his earthly condition: know assuredly, that the man *I meane*, must be beyond him, whome *you magnify* in this manner inasmuch as all he hath is but *base* in comparison of that *true treasure* whereof I speake.

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golde, silver, & such things, are not worthy to be once named, with wisdom and vnderstanding, these doe as farre exceede all temporary *reuenues*, as the most precious and prizelesse stones, doe over valew the *flynts* or *pibble* stones of the high way, or the streete.

And soe much the more assuredly *settled*, is the happiness, and excellency of their estate, by whome they are *gotten*, then his was, to whome they were once *giuen* without any merchandising, or meanes at all vsed to obtayne them. I am sure it prooved too true in the first *Adam* who *quickly* lost, those excellencies which came soe *lightly*: whereas that which is gotten *for us* by Christ, and gotten *by us* in Christ, is not subject to such easy miscarriage. The first *Adam* was like to *one*, who without any thought, and beyond all expectation of his *owne*, had mighty *rents* and riches befallen him: and we (*in him*) were like foolish and prodigall *heires*, that not considering whence our excellency *came*, and what it *cost*, neither he for his *owne part*, nor in *our person*, cared to keepe it, but *lost* it, and let it *soone* goe, to the vtter *undoing* of himself, and his posterity. He (& we *in him*) had it easily, without any merchandising, or any meanes at all (by him) vsed, it came vnto him *naturally*, he that gave him *nature* gave him *grace*, he was *created* holy and righteous; to be a *man*, and to be soe *excellent*, were both *one*, to him. But with the second *Adam* it is not soe (in regard of the elect *in him*) he hath merchandised with his father for vs, & *payd deare* for the purchase of vs: & what graces are acquired for vs, & attained by vs *in him*, are not *easy* to be takē from vs, because they came soe *hardly* to vs.

This is the coherence, and generall *summie* of our *text*, it being a *reason* to perswade men, to be enamoured

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red with that wisdom and vnderstanding which the former verse doth mention, and commend, that soe, we having (*once*) entertayned *it* into true, and *enigye affection*, might the more eagerly endeavour (by all meanes) to get it into our *possession*.

And this reason (if we marke it well) may be obserued to be *rising*, and *gradual*, from one step to another; for when the Lord saith that *wisdom* is better then any worldly *wealth*, he begin's with *silver*, which will buy any *meaner* commodity, then he goes on to *golde*, yea *fine golde*, which is farre better then *silver*; from thence, to *precious stones*, which are richer then *golde*, and least any thing vnder heaven, might seeme, either in it *self*, or in any mans *conceit*, to be equall, or neere, vnto these in *worthynes*, he add's, that, not only what any man *hath*, or may have, but all that can be *desired* by any man, is not comparable, to the *invaluable* benefit and advantage, that commeth to vs by *these*.

Thus having surveyed the *generalities* of these words in their *drift*, and *scope*, we will now come neerer, vnto a more particuler enquiry into them, as they lye in their order before vs.

[*For*] This word [*For*] is diversly vsed in scripture, but *usually* (though not *universally*) it is a *rationall* word, or a word inferring a *cause* or *reason*, of something that went before, and when it is *soe*, it noteth

the *efficient cause* of a thing. Rom. 8. 2.

the *finall cause*. Rom. 11. 36.

the *impulsive cause*. Mat. 5. 11.

Yet at other times, it noteth no cause at all, but is only either, an *affirmation*, as Gen. 28. 16.

or a *connexion*, Ioh. 15. 15.

or an

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or an *interrogation*. Mar. 9. 11.

or a *declaration*. Gen. 20. 7

or a *signe, sequell, or effect*. Mat 25. 35. Luk. 7. 47.

I observe these manifolde *sences* of it, that we might not (*ever*) imagine it to argue, a *reason*, or *cause* (as the *papist* doe) who most *absurdly* presse it vpon vs for a *cause*, in many places where it is but a mere *consequent*, conceiting it often to be a *reason*, and (without reason) obtrudeing it as a *reason* to vs, where it is *none*.

In our text it is a *reason* indeede, and sheweth why that man is in better case that hath *wisdome*, then he that hath ought *els*, because *wisdome* is better then all other things he can compasse: *heavenly graces*, are incomparably more excellent then *earthly riches*, therefore, is he most blessed that obtayneth *them*.

[*The merchandise*] you that are *Merchants* cannot but know the english of this word, it being a *metaphor* borrowed by God from your owne busines. In religion no such word can be *naturall*, or found in his proper sence and signification, inasmuch as it importeth *necessarily*, that which is an absolute, and vtter *impossibility*, in the things that passe betweene the Lord and vs. In *merchandise* men give to each other, the *full worth* & valew of the things received by *bargaine* or contract, both parties are contented, and rest satisfied with that, which *interchangeably* passeth from the one to the other, and either challengeth *his owne* by right.

In this *merchandise*, and our dealings with God we are soe farre from any such proceedings, that we cannot render to him one *farthing* of our owne, for the infinite good he *conferreth* vpon vs, and casteth most kindly vnto vs, we can *give* nothing to him, nor (by any *rights* of our owne) *clayme* any thing from him,

we

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*Reasons
why we
are sayd
to buy
wisdoms.*

we doe not *buy* at all, but we *beg* all.

And yet the Lord is pleased to make vse of *such words* as are assumed (as was sayd) from our *civill* conversation, and imployments; the *better* to shew vs the *best* things, by that *light* wherewith we may most easily discern them. Neither is this done (as I conceive) without all respect of some good *reason*, which may be rendered herof; among *many* others that might be produced; I propound these *f.w.* to serious consideration.

I Reason. First, to tel vs, that (*now*) grace, and goodnes are not *naturall* to vs, as (*once*) they were in the first *Adam*, who (as we noted even now) had this wisdoms and vnderstanding created in him, and conse'rd vpon him with his *being*.

He had it without any *a-doe* on his part, he was no sooner a *man*, then he was *wise*, & *gracious*, & had this blessed vnderstanding in him. It is nothing *see*, but much otherwise, now, we must *get* that, which was *given* him, he had it with wōderfull *facility*, our attaynement will be with some *difficulty*. It is two things (*now*) to be a *man*, and to be *holy*, it is

not nature

but endeavour

that must bring vs to *grace*, if we ever have it: it is become an *art*, to be excellent, there is a *mystery* in it, we must be *bound* to it, and *serue* for it, before we can be free of their *corporation* who enjoy it, namely those alone that are *incorporated* (by grace) into Christ Iesus.

Noe man is *borne* a naturall merchant, neither can any be *naturally* religious, it must be *sought*, it must be *bought*, we must be trayned vp in this *trade* of heaven, this cunning comes not by *kinde*, it will cost time and paynes,

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paynes, to be well seene into this *science*. We must be *heavenly merchants*, if we will hope to be *happy men*.

Secondly to shew vs some semblance, betweene your
civill and his spirituall, his true, and your tem-^{2.} Reason
porary merchandise.

Some semblance I say, for *some* there is, (yet not very much) and *some* is enough to Gods purpose, and sufficient to teach vs *some* blessed lessons, out of our *owne booke*. Indeepe the only reason why there is *no more* currant consimilitude betweene them, is the *better* being of Gods merchandise aboue *mans*, the *one* doth see wonderfully overgoe the *other*, that in many particulars, *earthly* merchandise is neither *able*, nor *worthy*, to become a shaddow, or representation, of the *heavenly*.

That correspondence that is, must be conceived in the *true*, *strict*, and *wise* sence, of this, and other such words as are in vse among *merchants*, to these *civill* ends, which we will so farre apply to *spirituall* purposes, as any warrantable, and sound *concurrence* will goe with vs in the *analogy* of faith; without any vaine or fruitles *fancy*, of our owne.

Would we *then* see in what sence heavenly things may be called a *merchandise*, and in what sence *not*; this is easy to him that will understand.

In one *mayne* thing it holdeth *not*, for (as we heard a litle before) in all merchandising there is *majestie*, and change of *one* good thing, for *another*; commodity for commodity, or *money* for *ware*, to the just and estimated *value*, of the rate, and worth of the things *bought*, or *bartared*: but (*thus*) cannot we merchandise, or *trade* with the most high; we can neither *buy*, nor *bartar* with him, because we want what to *give* him, *not*

only to the *full worth*, but we can give him nothing of *any worth* to purchase those *most worthy* favours, and advantages, whereof all his people are free partakers. It were intollerable pride, and presumption not to be put vp, or endured, at our hands, that we that are *vile*, and *worthles* by sin, having *all* evill, and *no* good thing in vs at all, should *once* conceit or harbour *one* thought, of trading with God vpon any such tearmes of satisfying him for the *least* *faour* we have either in *whole* or in *part*, with any thing that is ours. Soe that (*herin*) the merchandise (on our part) is marred, because we have nothing to trade with.

Yet (in diuers other regards) it holderth good, and is very justifiable if we take good notice

First that God doth call and, encourage vs to this celestial *commerce*, and bids vs come and *buy* of him.

So saith Solomon. Pro. 23. 23. *buy the truth*

So saith Isaiah: Cap. 55. 1. *come buy without silver*] So saith Christ Reu. 3. 18. *I counsell thee to buy of me*]

Beholde, *he* will account vs *buyers* and will have vs come to *buy*, who knowe's we have nothing at all to *pay*:

And soe much the more *strange*, may this seeme to be if withall we remember, that it cannot be found in any place, that God is sayd to be a *seller*, or to *sell* vs any thig which he would have vs *buy*: these two words (in all mens *reason*) are proper *relatives* one to another yet the Lord will part, and make a *reue* betwixt them, saying we shall *buy*, that which he no where saith he will *sell*: it is not read in all Gods booke, that over he *solds* any goodnes to any man, but that which we have from him is every where called his free and must *gracious*

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cious gift vnto vs.

Now & then, the Lord is sayd to sell his people into their enemyes hands, as in the *bookes of Iudges*, and in the *Psalme*, the church thus complayneth. [*Thou sellest thy people for nought and takest no money for them*] but this kinde of sale, is no such selling as is opposite to the buying before spoken off, nor doth it any way match, the merchandise. But how then (wil some say) can we be sayd to buy of God, whenas he cannot be sayd to sell to vs? why thus it may be, and it may be the Lord would teach vs out of his kinde of selling, (though it be of another kinde) what he himself doth intend, and would have vs to vnderstand by our buying, thus. His selling of his people for nought, did note the small respect, the base esteeme he had of them, when their notorious naughtines they had deserved his neglect, and provoked the eyes of his glory against them, to cast them out of their good land, and send them captiues among Pagans. We our selves when we have a jade of ill qualities, will put him off to any man for litle or nothing. Now our buying may be smelt by the contrary herevnto, and by it, must needes be meant our great care, regard, and estimate, of the graces which the Lord is pleased (in his grace) to bestow vpon vs, that we have them in singuler respect, and most gracious account, as we would doe: that *plafe* or those *jewels*, which cost vs more deare.

So then God *solde* his people without money, when he did *disrespect*, and *reject* them: we *buy* without money, when we *prize*, and *repute* highly of his graces. It is not (we see) any money matter, to manage this merchandise, whatsoeuer we buy, there is nothing to pay, but something to performe; the driving of this trade

Quest.

Answ.

cōsisteth in *action*. He is a *good dealer*, that is a *good doer*. All that we give for heavens *inestimable* excellencies, is our truest valuation, our highest estimate, and the dearest account of them, we are able to expresse, when we have once knowne, and felt their *worth* within our soules: if we prize them preciously, our purchase is made; So did Paul, who accounted *all things* (even the things which otherwise, were advantage to him) *lesse*, & *dung*, and exceeding *vile*, as the basest excrements, in regard of the excellent knowledge of Christ. Soe did he in he parable, that solde all, to buy that *pearle* which he found. And our Solomon tell's vs that we should all doe *for*, and that if we *doe*, it wilbe *well* with vs, we shall surely *gaine* that, wherof we have soe good *respect*. And if we would be tryed by a well experienced *man*, one that knew how blessed it was to be possest of *wisdom* and vnderstanding, take David for the party, and his speech for your *practise*, herein he professes these things were to him, more deare then all things,

phil.

mat. 13.

pro. 2. 3. 4.
3.psal. 119.
72. 103.

*better then thousands of gold and silver
fetter then she hony & the bay combe*

With many more the like sayings, shewing his *rare* account of these graces, wherewith he was abundantly *enriched*. So then to buy *wisdom*, or to *merchandise* for it, is no more, then to repute it precious, & to thinke it *worth buying*, keeping it with all *care*, as we doe the best things we can *buy*, and making *much* of it, yea the *most* we can make, both in opinion, and *practise*.

Secondly our attaine ment of *wisdom* may be called a *merchandise* properly, in respect of Christ, for he (on our behalle) was indeede the *purchaser* of his fathers *mercy* to vs, and the *paymaster* of his fathers *justice* for vs.

the

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The apostle *Paul* tell's vs, that we are *bought with a dear price*, and the same doth *Prove* a vouch also, and soe *2. cor. 2. 2.* doe others, & well and warrantably they may, considering how *deare* we are payd for, by him, who redeemed vs at a *high rate*, (I had almost sayd *too high a rate*) considering what base, debauched, and worthles creatures we were; *nothing*, worse then *nothing*, *vainly*, lighter then *vainity*: a whole world of such vile contemptible vermyne, cannot be esteemed worth a *drop of his blood*, noe nor a *haye of his head*: had it not beene that the *justice* of God was to be *satisfied*, the *fauour* of God to be *procured*, his *law* to be *fulfilled*, his *loue* to be *confirmed*.

And all righteousness to be wrought and accomplished; how had we (*vainly* *wretches*) beene (*of our selues*) worth redeeming or respecting? noe, these *infinite*, most *excellent*, and *incomparable* things of God, were worthy of the life, and death of *Iesu Christ*, to worke and bring them to that passe, that we might be intrested into them, through his purchase of them, Now our Lord & redeemer having *bought* vs, & *payd* an allsufficient satisfaction for vs, & enabled vs by his power to attaine some lauing grace, hence are we in him sayd to *buy* grace through *grace* for *merchandise*, or *buying* *spiritually*, *2. cor. 1. 1.* which it is attributed to vs; wherof we may be the better perswaded, if we remember that God is pleased to call the beginnings of his graces in vs his *first fruits*, once, and againe, by *2. Cor. 1. 1.* the apostle, thereby intimating, as it were, a *buying* betwene him & vs, because he would *buy* vs, *Eph. 1. 13* in our holy course, as a *father* who hath an inheritance for his *son*, take's the *money* that any friends giue him, & to *make*

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make him the more willing to *part* with that, which he cannot *employ*, he tell's him, well, this you shall give me for this *house and lands*; & it shalbe *yours*, one day.

But to passe this, let vs labour to be *wise*, and *wary* beware, that in any wise we *binde not* the Lord to any words, he is *free* to chuse and vse what he pleaseth, is it not *great reason* that he should have *liberty*, of speaking who is *infinitely wise*, in every word he *speake's*? and therefore when soever the Lord takes any word of *ours*, wherein we cannot discern a cleare cōcurrence of his minde let vs sift the more narrowly for his intendement therein and blame our *blindenes*, that we cannot see it, as we should. It is not for *nothing at all*, though it may be but for some *one*, or very *few* things) that he makes choyse of these *stovill* tearmes, to teach vs the knowledge and skill of *celestiall* truth thereby.

Let vs not therefore *slight off* these words, or looke with a shallow, or superficiall *eye*, vpon them, but take them into our most serious consideration to search out the meaning of God in them:

³ *Thirdly*, it is possible, the Lord alludes to *this word*, Reason. both here and elsewhere, to illustrate our *best being*, in the *best things* and call's his greatest *mercy's*, and our choicest *graces*, [*Merchandise*] because he would magnify and commend the course of a *merchants* life, to be lawfull, honest, and good, and a calling of his owne institution and allowance in as much as he makes this *employment*, the *honourable* *employment*, of these admirable excellencies, in whose *employment* we are truly blessed before him. If every christian that would be blessed must *merchandise*, can any christian conceit basely of *merchandising*, the scriptures *attestation* of the honour and excellency of this *praiseworthy*, trade and *state* of life,

are

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: 15.

are many; I thought good to mention *this* among the rest, the better to muzzle and bung vp the malignant tongue of any *foole* mouth, that shall ever bark against it *foe* curiously, and *unchristianly*, as diuers have done. And thus we see *how* and *wherefore* these things are called *merchandise*. The next word followeth.

Thereof that is, of the wisdom and vnderstanding spoke of in the 13, *verse*, whereby *all graces* are meant. It is a common thing through out the scripture, to notify all *good*, or *evil*, vnder some *one grace*, or *vice* of either sort; but it is more proper to *this booke*, then any other to propound

all graces, vnder the name of *Wisdom*

all vices, vnder the name of *Folly*.

Throughout the *Proverbs*, *Solomon* [wise man] is a compleat christian, furnisht with all *sewing graces*; and he that is called [a *foole*] here, is the man, that is full of all *impiety*, and *prophane*.

But let vs come a litle *nearer* to this word [therof] and we shall finde it to be added out of inspeakeable wisdom in God, and that *not only* to evidence the excellency of wisdom aboue wealth, *but also*, to difference, and distinguish *this merchandise*, from *another*, which is obtruded vpon millions of men and pretended yea pressed to be *true*, & *spirituall*, when as vpon due tryall, it will prove to be no better then *verball*, and *diabolicall*, to cozen, to gull, and to delude all such as deale in it, or meddle with it: who not knowing a *Pedler* from a *merchaunt*, doe take these *trifeling vanities*, for rich commodities.

I meane the *merchandise* of the [Great *whore*] of whome, and of her merchants and the things the buy'es & sell's, Saint *Peter* sayes some thing and Saint

Iohn

John lives more in his *new lawes* in which booke, (and in diuers places thereof), the Lord Iesus doth at large lay her and her doings open, that all men may see how, with whom and where she trafficketh.

How she trafficketh, let *Peter* tell vs, (even *that Peter*, whom they brag to be their *Parson*) he hath evidently decyphered her vile dealing to be *pryvy*, and *close*; *covetous* and *catibing*; *countersfeits* and *fawning*: soe saith ye text: [*who shall pryvyly bring in damnable heresies*] and through covetousnes make merchandise of you: all *whores qualities*, as right as can be.

Re. 18. 3. *With* whom, she trafficketh, *Saint Iohn* tell's vs, who are her *merchants*, no meane men; no base fellows, but *kings*, and *great ones* and that of *all nations* too; *Wherein* she trafficketh to wit, in any thing that may bring her in *silver* and *golds*, & *price* and *pay*, to gaine which, she sells *merits* indulgences, *masses*, *dispensations*, *trent* *alls* *dirges*, the fardle of all her *fopperies* is opened, & set to sale, yea to enrich her selfe, she cares not to make prize of the *soules* of men too; causing them to sell their *soules* to her, for such *toyes* as she sell's them, are good for them both *living* and *dead*; that she may sell them to the *divell*, for such things, as she knowe's are good for her selfe, to purchase more *sin*, wealth, and *power* to her kingdome.

These are her *wares*, and none but she may sell them, noe *monopoly* is like this; the *Divell* is sole *seller*, he will trust none but her to be his *factors*; none but her owne *waits* to be her *traffickers*; & soe this trade of bellish *trash*, is driven betwene them, and with it they *carry* *each* mens *consciencs*, and *trash* *money* out of mens *purses*, and for this *double* *damage*, give them some *jolly* *poppet*, or foolish *vanity*, that shall *trebble* it all they

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they sell, hath this scale of a hellish, and infernall in-
vention, that *all the profit* come's to the *seller*, he will-
be sure of money, the *buyer* hath nothing but fruitles
vanity. And soe they (*filly soules*) are gull'd to lay out
their *siluer*, and *golde*, and not for *bread*, or rather *bus*
for *bread*, even then, when they hope, and beleene
they haue bought A GOD.

Now [*the merchandise thereof*] is as much *worse* then
the *merchandise* of golde, and siluer, as this in our text
is *better* then both, and no man endued of God with
any vnderstanding, will once intermeddle *here*, the
only *traders*, are these infatuated *fooles*, whome

God hath given over to strong *delusion*:
the *Devil* hath gotten into his *dominion*:

And these *mysticall fatts* doe suffer (nay joy to see)
them selves miserably abused by these *Catholike toglers*
of whome they thinke they doe receive; the *orne-*
ments of Christ, whenas they have nothing but Anti-
christian *excrements*, and soe in steed of *adorneing* and
bewtifying their soules, they doe *defile* & abase them
out of measure.

For this cause, even because [*hereof*], doth the holy
Ghost insert most *wisely*, this word [*thereof*] that wise
men might be able to discern betweene the *merchan-*
dise of God, which evermore brings great *advantage*,
and that of the *man of sin*, which is never, more then
meere *consequence*. Now put we forward to the next [*is*
better] that is to say, every way beyond it, in all kinde
of benefits and advantages. I cannot conceive the
word [*better*] to beare any *worse* sence here, then the
best it hath any where, because (as we shall shew when
we come vnto it) these *diuine graces*, doe so farre ex-
ceede all *worldly riches*, as no man can compleatly com-

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prehend and discover. There is no *comparifon* betweene them; the one is not worthy to be named with the other; *Wealth* is scarce good enough to wayte vpon *Wifdome*. But this is easy: we proceede.

[*Then Silver: golde, yea fine golde, &c.*] the Lord is not sparing (we see) to magnify *Wifdome*, in that he doth it in soe many words, which words doe import most *precious* things: and that (as was remembred before) by a *gradation*, or rising, from one good thing, to another that is *better* then it, and from that to another yet *better*: as we all know

Silver to excede all commodities;

Golde to excede *silver*.

Precious stones to excede *Golde*.

And that no place might at all be left in mans hart, for any thought of a thing, that might seeme *better*, he putt's in all that *man* hart can desire, or wish to enjoy, affirming, that to have saving grace, is a more happy thing, then to have *all things* *th*, that the soule of an earthly minded man could desire to have.

So that now we see what these words doe containe, to wit, in the generall, a *confirmation* of that commendation of *wifdome* and vnderstanding, which is given vs by the holy ghost, in the verse going before.

This *confirmation* (if we descend into particulers) is *comparative*, &c. riseth from one good thing to another and from that to a *better*, to shew that *wifdome* is the *best* of all good things, and exceeding farre surmounteth all temporary commodities.

The parts are *three*

1. the things compared, to wit, *wifdome* & *wealth*.
2. the *wealth* wherewith *wifdome* is compared:
3. which is partly expressed: *silver, golde, precious stones*

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Names, partly included: all that thou canst desire.

3. the disproportion betweene them, which sheweth not only, that *wisdom* is *something better* then *wealth*, but also that it doth incomparably surpasse and exceede it.

Thus, being now come to the *sence*, and *parts* of the words, let vs put forward toward the *matter* that is containd in them: which that we may the better come to vnderstand, be it all wayes, well and carefully remembred and considered of vs, that inasmuch as it pleaseth the Lord to speake vnto vs of these *mysticall things* in such *manifest english*, as he doth, in calling it [*A Merchandise*] it shall well become vs to scan, and search, that we may see, how *farre*, and *wherein*, the *metaphor* doth mayntaine this truth; and make it appeare, that the odds and excellency lyeth here. And the more to enlighten vs herein, let vs proportion THIS, *merchandise*, and MANS together, comparing the one with the other, in such particulars, as wherein the correspondence will holde currant, and sound, by warrant from God.

To run through all passages, would be an endles race, and a fruitles endeavor, taking vp more time, then may be conveniently spared therevnto; we will not therefore goe *that course*, but strive so that way which may be *swiftest*, and *clearest* to the truth here intended; meddling only with such as are most *familiar* to our notice, and most *materiall* to our purpose, and in opening these, we will doe our best to shunt all *extraneous*, both of *incense*, and of *negligence*, because, as it is not good, to be *curious*, so is it naught to be *carelesse*, the one is *idly*, the other is *evil*, both are reprovable, especially in matters of religion. It shall be safest.

for vs to goe that *beaten way* wherein, we may looke for *Gods light* to guide vs, and to avoyd all *corners*, and *by-pathes*. The *evidence* of his *word*, to *confirm* all we speake, the assurance of his *spirit*, to *comfort* and quicken vs in all that is *spoken*, are the things we should seeke for, the one makes it *sound* to our *conscience*, the other make's it *sweete* to our *experience*, let vs therefore labour for *both* these, that soe our instructions may become sensible to *you*, and *you* the more happy by *them*.

Well then, let vs approach to the mayne point; which we will first *propound*, & then *prove*. And this it is.

Doct.

GODS MERCHANDISE IS BETTER THEN MANS: it is better being a Trader for *wisdom* then for *wealth*, for *Grace*, then for *Good*; this commerce with *us*, doth farre exceede *ours* with *one another*; and wilbe founde (every way) infinitely more beneficiall.

Who can doubt of this, that heare's the *Lord himself* both speake it, and vrge it, as he doth? especially if withall he remember, what *infinite* knowledge, and wisdom is in the Lord, that he is not as man; that he should be partially *over-affected* to any thing he *see's*, or weakely *over-scene* in any thing he *say's*.

either touching his *owne graces*, or touching our *commodities*.

To set the one at *too high a rate*, or to *undervalue* the other, but most *uprightly* to estimate *both*, in all *equality*, as they are, in their owne *ranke*, and *quality*. So that *his word* which never fayled, were enough to worke any mans hart to a full assurance of the truth hereof: howbeit, because, we may meete with such faithlesse and vnbeleueing harts as *Thomas* had; who must *see* and *feele* before they will consent and *confesse*;

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beyond Mans

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fesse; let vs come neerer, and take better notice of this truth, and we hope that in *handling* this point, we shall have our harts fully confirmed therein.

Let vs looke then, and pry into every particuler, and (as it were) feele, and put our fingers into them, and we shall finde the *prooffes* of this doctrine as undeniable to *evince vs*, as the *prisms* in Christs body were to *convince him*: and soe from *propounding* what we say, we come now to *prove* the same.

That which we say is no more but this; that *this merchandise* with God, is better then *all merchandise* with *men*. God himself saith as much, and will beare vs out in that we say, by comission from heaven. But let vs se (will some say) *whether* it surpasseth *any* (say we) see if you can, wherin it surpasseth *any*: come along, & let vs view some *few* things of *many*, that we might looke vpon, and you will *easily assent*, that this is a true saying: and that we may not be carryed into any *confusion* in our inquiry, and confirmation, let vs range those things into some order, which we produce for evidence in the point, and in every of them the *verity* of what we speake, will appeare vnto vs abundantly.

Let it then be *carefully* noted, and considered of vs, that in *three* speciall respects *this* trading hath preheminance beyond *any*, and every respect may be in steed of a most apparant and incontrolleable *reason*, to settle vs in the assured persuasion of the *superabundant* benefit of this heavenly and blessed traffike.

Know, then, that to the better being of this *merchandise*, these things doe concur.

1. that it *dealeth* *not* some things that *any* *dealeth*.

2. that

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2. that it *hath* some things that *your* *best* *affo*.

3. that it *hath* somethings that *your* *best* *not*.

Some things are *proper* to your *merchandise*, alone, to wit, all that are *bad* as having any *damage*, or *danger* in them.

Some things are *common* to this with yours, to wit, all things that bring any *benefit*.

Some things are *proper* to this alone, and not *common*, or any way communicable to *yours*, to wit, all those most rare, excellent, and extraordinary prerogatives (which may truly be entituled *royall*) because they are not incident to *several* trade, or temporary dealings, the things that are *below* cannot be capable of those *high* advantages, which this doth afford.

Now every of these wilbe most *willing* witnesses of our *proposition* and support it against all cavill and contradiction. And if in the prosecution of them (considering I must make use of your words) I shall not be *for* *my*, and exact in your *artificiall* tearmes of *trade*, as the nature of Gods *Memph*, and the *allusion* thereof, to your *merchandise* doth require, I hope you will remember; that your words are out of our *element*, yet we will ayne as neere as we can, for the illumination of your mindes in this matter, and if we *speak* *improperly*, pardon vs. because we affect; rather *evidence* of *proving*, then *are* of *speaking*, in Gods *matters*. Our drift and *mayne* *scope* is *divine*, (so should *of* *here*) and *againe* *both* we are not to be *soo* *complac*, and *contrite* in our *mod* as some are, who have more *shew* of *Retorike* in *one* *sermō*, then *sub* *stance* of *religion* in *ten*. And so we come to shew the odds and excellency of this *trade* in each of these *three* *rankes* before *us* *embrard* *mod* *we* *shall* *inde* *be*

THE BEST MERCHANDISE. *The Adventure* 23

First, this *merchandise* must needs be better then all other, because whatsoever is *bad* in yours, is not to be founde in this at all, it hath nothing that is any way *evill*, or *incommodious*: and in yours there are many things (of this kinde) much complayned off: as namely.

Great, Adventures:

Bad, debts.

Bad, commodities.

Bad, servants.

Here is a *four-fold* danger, the *hassard* at sea is much; *trusting* of it in sale is as much, many times your goods are *ill conditioned*, and some servants are *disloyally mynded*: these are the meanes of many a merchants miscarriage, and vndoing.

But beholde, this *merchandise* hath *none*, (no not *one*) of these, let vs list every one by it self, and we shall see it to be foe. And first for *Adventure*, we may be assured here is none at all, nor none there can be. Heavenly things are subject to no hazzard.

For your earthly, you must either *abide* the *adventure*, or *buy* the *insurance*: here neede *swischer*. All trading vnder heaven, in to all *climates*, in all *commodities*, is more or lesse *uncertaine*, and dangerous, & in the *richest* and *rarest*, there is most feare, because they are in places *farthest* remote. But in this trade which is from heaven, it is nothing foe.

God himself tell's vs that wealth hath *wings* and can, and will, fly from vs: that riches are *uncertaine*: *pro. 23. 5.* that they are things that *perish*: yea, that they *perish*, *1. Tim. 6. 17.* *in their using*: may, that they perish, before they come *1. Job. 2. 17.* to bevsed, even while they are *in transportation*.

And some of his saints can say it by experience, *Leuab. 1. 3*
who

who have fallen from a mighty estate, to miserable poverty, & some (again) risen from a meane condition, to wonderful wealth.

Dan. 4. Yea some wicked men will witness it too, who tell vs, that he that is great, God is able so to abase; as it did well appeare in the foole in the Gospell, who let himself a long lease of many yeares, of all the land and revenue he had, & it was cancelled, & expired the same night, within few howres after he had sealed it, vnto himself.

And if none of these had spoken it, your selves in that which some have felt, and more haue scene, would say it were as true as the Gospell, inasmuch as dayly newes comes of shipwracks from one coast, of bankrupts from another, what betweene felonious Pyrates, vnskillfull Pilots, vnfaithfull seruants, ill wares, ill weathers, naughty times, improvidence in buying, oversight in selling, & a multitude more such miserable & mournfull instances, millions of men sink in their states, and are drowned in these snares of the world, what heavy catalogues of decayed men, come continually, who were thought great, and prone worth little or nothing? what vncomfortable accounts doth many a merchant overlooke? that look't for advantage, and hath lost of his principall, (yea it may be his whole principall) & that by those land pyrates I meane, not those Bankrupts whome the Lord doth humble, by casualties, incident to the most benefit among men, whose houses are broken, more then their Estates, and more (it may be) for other mens states, then their owne, whose soules are more wofull for want, wherewith to satisfy others, then for the wants they feelee them selves; these haue both Gods comiseration, and mans.] But the Bankrupts I meane are those which breake, with God and men both

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Not Adversitate

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at once, who
 not necessarily
 but villanously
 make a *rupture* where none is, to *injure* others, and to
enrich themselves, building their owne states vpon
 the *vajnes* of many other mens, and in *one act*, committing
 a *fourfold* felony, in robbing
 God of his *goodnes*.

Men of their *goods*.Themselves of their *benefits*.Many of their *money*.

My soule hath a quarrell against these accursed
cormorants, who deuoure multitudes, and draw them
 into wonderfull *misery*, to make vp their owne *mon-*
ies, not caring to overturne all *trade*, to raze the *fon-*
dation, & *pillars* of a *common wealth*, for the support of
 themselves; those are the *vipers* of mankind, and the
bane of the *body ciuill* that bred them; *liuing*, and *gay-*
ning, as the *diuell* doth, only by the *undoing* of every
 body they deale with. The *thiefe* by the high way,
 the *pirate* at sea, the combination of all *robbers*, of all
roaners, are farre short of these *fellows*; they *professe*
stealing, and take as much as they finde, and a man
 knowes what he loseth: *these* mysticall, and mon-
 strous *villanes*, deceive and colinns, in the vse of
 our *loue* to them, *confidence* in them, *commerce* with
 them, that when we thinke we *lende* to doe them *good*,
 trust them with our *good*, or trade with them to doe
 our *selues* good, behold, their *fidelity* is become *fellony*,
 our *kindnes* is our *damage*, all is lost we let them haue
 they grow *fats* with other mens *flesh*, and lyne them-
 selves with the *skine*, which they teare from all such,
 as they haue traded withall.

D

All

All and every of these (with more that might be reckoned vp,) you know and acknowledge to be as *miserable*, as they are *manifest* declarations of the dangerous and vncertaine state of your merchandise, among men, and to that ill passe, are the *times*, and the *travell* of men, now come, that you often tell vs (and *too truly*) you know not *who* to trust, *how* to be sure of your owne, *whome* to deale withall; without feare; of losse.

But in *this* trade and commerce wherof we treat, there is no such *matter*, nay, there can be noe such *miserable*, in one kinde or other: all is *secure*, *stable*, *fruit*, and *infallible*, you neede not feare, or doubt any thing in the least. When we deale for our *soules*, we deale upon *sure* termes; and that we might (as the Lord would haue vs) know this, we finde *him* very plentifully *instructing* our spirituall estate vnto vs, by all kinde of confirmation that can be,

2. Cor. 20.

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Pf. 89. 33

Heb. 6. 17.

18.

by his *promise*.by his *oath*.by *testimonies*.

Yea by his *whole self*, who bring *wholy* *infinite*, yet doth engage his *whole infinite essence* (at all the vnsearchable *excellencies*, that are enclosed) that nothing shall haile either of *temptations*, *trials*, or of our *good*, from him. What hath *God* Christ sayd in this case? *hath* he not assured vs that *death* cannot preuaile, noe nor the *power*, that is the *great* power of hell? *hath* he not sayd, that *his* *name* is *manifest*, before one jot or tittle of that which is written for our *soules* comfort, shall be *unfulfilled*? *hath* he not toll *temptations*, that that *better* part, which *every* had chosen, should neuer be taken from her? Hath he not bidden vs to lay vp for
our

THE BEST MERCHANDISE,

The Advantage

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our selves treasures in heaven, and assured vs against all perills, that no *cheife* can reach it, no *rich*, no *much*, corrupt or wrong it. *And* this, and much more hath he sayd (of purpose) to establish our harts against all feare of any danger.

And as he hath *sayd* thus much, soe hath he *done* much more. He hath *assuredly* vnderstaken to give vs all security, that can be desired in this case. He hath secured vs by his *life*, by his *death*, by all his *obedience*, both *active*, and *passive*, what he *did*, what he *endured*, his *rising* from the grave, his *ascending* into glory, and his perpetuall *intercession* for vs, at the right hand of his father; all is for vs, all this did he vndergoe (as it were) to *undersee* and *prop* vp our harts, that we might be fully confirmed in the *sounde assurance* of all heavenly happines. These were all the *dangers* that might mischeife vs; and he hath endured, and gone through them, that we might be *free* from all feare of them, and having *spoyled* these powers, that opposed our best comforts, he hath *assured* vs that we cannot *perish*, nor be taken out of his hand, and bid's vs bee of good cheere, because he hath overcome *that world* of our enemyes, that withstood vs, and made *utterly* voyd all the *uicyness* of the most pernicious aduersaryes we had, that they cannot at all *endanger*, nor any way *impayre*, these precious benefits. *Satan* our *grand enemy*, he is troden vnder our feete: The *world*, and our owne *flesh*; (his *two mayne*, and most *harmfull* instruments of our evill) they are vanquished also: *Nothing* is left *unconquered*, all is *nullified*, that might trouble vs, in *this* our *infallible assurance*, touching these things.

And herevpon, have the saints of God, beene *bolde*, and borne vp themselves, with all *undaunted* resolu-

tion of spirit. [I am sure my redeemer liveth, & that I shall
Iob. 19. 25 see him] saith *Iob.* [I beleevd therefore I spake] saith *David*
Pf 116. 10 [I know whome I have beleevd] saith *Paul.* We have a most
2. pe. 1. 19. sure worde] saith *Peter.* And we may all say, we have a
 most sure God, to our father, who changeth not: a sure rock
 to our redeemer, who moveth not: a sure spirit to our
 comforter, who departeth not, but abideth by us for
 ever. Heere is sure worke of all sydes (we see), on Gods
 part, who would have vs settle our harts, to make our
 election sure to our selves, for our owne parts. Never
 did any man, miscarry that was a true trader in this
 merchandise, but every soule who hath dealt soundly
 herein, was as ceartaine of his spirituall benefit, as of
 his naturall being.

Howbeit, not withstanding all that is sayd, yea, or
 that can be sayd, the *Devell* (who is a mighty looser, by
 the manifestation herof) doth all he can, to weaken, and
 infringe the faith of Gods elect, in this point of the
 faithfulness of God, that they may (like his vassals) feare
 where no feare is; he doth dayly fill their harts, with
 this & that difficulty, shrilling these, & those impossibili-
 ties into their thoughts, presenting a worlde of impediments
 vnto them, to breede doubtfullnes, and distrust
 (yea, and *aspasie* too) in them, if by any meanes he
 may draw them therevnto, and affright them from
 that assistance, wherewith they may most boldely, safe-
 ly, and couragiously repose themselves, with joy vpon
 the Lord.

But let vs see what it is he opposeth, & vpbraideth
 vs withall? Nay, (will some say) what is it not, or whe-
 rewith doth he not terrefy vs? he sett's heaven, earth,
 & bea against vs, he perswaded vs, that all things are
 enemyes to vs.

Gods

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29

Gods justice and severity.

Our owne sin and impiety.

His owne mallice and cruelty.

How are we able to withstand *any one*; much lesse, every one of these; they being *all* farre above our power.

Well, we confesse they are *too heavy* for vs to vndergoe; and would not only *endanger*, but *overturue*, and *drowne* all, if any one of them should be layd vpon vs: but as the case stands, there is noe *discomfort* in them at all, though they be put *all together*.

True it is, that God hath much against vs, but it is *as true* that there is absolute satisfaction made (on our behalfe,) and soe noe feare now, because *his anger* is appeased towards vs, *his fauour* purchased for vs, *his loue* promised to vs, all *reconciliation*, all *compassion eternally*, and *irrevocably*, assured, and estated vpon vs.

It it also *as true*, that our owne sins are many, and mighty, and simply *insupportable*, and would sink vs into the bottomeles pitt, if their *least weight* did lye vpon vs, but it is as true, that they are *freely and fully* forgiven, and we reputed as *guileles*, and accounted as *innocent*, as if we had never committed any one of them: the Lord hath *layd strength upon one that is mighty*: and (even the *strength of our sin*, the whole law) and the curse therof he that is mighty hath done great things for vs, in carrying the iniquities of vs all, and in being *made sin*, and *made a curse* for vs, that we might be *made the righteousness* of God, and soe become (through grace,) to be everlastingly blessed with him, as the Apostle speaketh to the churches, of *2. Cor. 5.²¹*
Gal. 3. 13.
14.
 Corinth and Galatia.

And

And as for *Satan* makes, howsoever it be much, yet it neede to trouble but *little*, nay, not at all, for he is a *conquered*, and a *captivated* enemy, kild to our hand, & throwne vnder our *feete*, (as we heard before) well he may *bite*, but he cannot *bite* vs, he may *maillie*, but *mischeife* vs he cannot: What is *his power*, to the *power* of God that keepe's vs? what is his *subtily*, to the *wisdom* of God that directs vs? hath it not most happily appeared that he hath beene *confounded* in all his deuises against vs. and we *comforted* more stedfastly; by that course, whereby he sought our ruine *eternally*? I thinke if we looke well into it, it is better with vs *now*, then it was, before he began to bring euill vpon vs. And what is (*now*) left of him, but the bare *shadow*, or *outside* of an aduersary, in regard of that he *was*, when he had power not only to *tempt*, but to *ouerturne* vs; but now he can *only tempt* vs, we (in our Christ) can *ouerturne* him.

Let vs not then (*like fables*) feare, or discomfort our selues, or suffer others to disquiet vs with things of no *consequence*, in this our *commerce* with our God. Say, our *ships*, be *brittle*, suppose our *passage* be *boystrious*; admit what we *carry*, be *corrupt*, what is all this; when we further consider, that we have an *omnipotent Pilot*, that can make our *vessel* *thye*, the *sea* *quiet*, and change our *commodities* into *better* condition. The liuing God both *can doe*, and hath promised that he *will doe*, all this: & the more to assure vs of soe much, it pleaseth him to vtter and expresse his *consolations* vnto vs, in *sea-faring mens tearmes*, speaking to vs, as vnto *Isai. 54. 11* men in *sea dangers*, saying [*Oh thou afflicted & tossed* *cap. 43. 2.* *with tempest &c.*] & againe, [*When thou passest through the water I will be with thee, that the floods shall not drown*]

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The Adventure 21

breine shew; & by the apostle he further tells us what good ground *uske* we have, to wit, an *anchor*, sure and steadfast] that cannot faile us: though therefore some *feeming* danger may shew it self, yet assured danger there is none: something may *appeare* very perilous to our flesh and blood, to our *fealty*, ignorance, and infidelity, as the *grawle* sea, and the *great* billow, doth to fresh water *souldiers*, who start and shrink at every wave: but to our faith, and that power of grace given vs of God, nothing can *proove* *terrible*; howsoever it appeare. We have a God that can *doe* *what* *soever* he will, and hath power at his pleasure, to *imploy* for our best good, and will doe by that power, according to his pleasure, whatsoever may any way redounde to the happiness of their hearts, who *voluntarily* desire to deale with him. Vpon him, and vpon his *power* and *favor* we depend, fearing no *present*, or *future* perill in anything appertayning to his kingdom, and those *affayres* that concerne the same. And in this resolution let all Gods saints set up their rest forever.

Heb. 6.19

Heb. 11.3

For there is a crew of *upstart* TRADERS, or rather INTRVDERS, I meane *Papists*, & *Ministers* (I joyne them together, though the one be much *ganger* then the other, yet are both, late *ministers* in respect of the ancient truth of God) who *willfully* (or rather *foolishly*) in Gods *merchandise*; and sell men, that there is great *hazard*, and *adventure* borne in this blessed trade, and no such manifest and undoubted security, as we plead, but danger of being *hindered*; & falling in *Grace*, in falling finally from it, and notwithstanding of being blessed in *Glory*, or assurance of being received into it.

Concerning these, I am persuaded *truly* they
speake

speake as they thinke, and (I thinke,) they findethem-
selves, as they speake to others, for not being made free
of the fellowship of Gods faithfull ones, the truth not
having yet made them free of the communion and
corporation of the true saints; I can see noe reason, (se-
ing they wilbe, INTERLOPING, in Error) but they
should mistrust danger, and meete with it too, and
not enjoy the gracions previledgis, and these most be-
neficiall immunities of that society, wherof they are
not. And seing they are not members united, but mon-
sters annexed therevnto, why should they goe vpon as
sore grounds as Gods owne doe. Especially seing they
will not make God, soe good a master, or his sutors, soe
good merchandis, as they grant the Diuill to be, for they
confesse that all that deale for him, are sure enough
of damnation; but of those that are agents for the Lord,
it may be doubted of their salvation, yea it is presump-
tion, to rest infallibly vpon it; which if they spake, &
intended only of themselves, I could soone put it into
my creede, but being (as they meane it) vniuersally true
of the very elect, what man (having the faith of Gods elect,
in him) can beleeeve it?

Some also there are among the multitude of our
ignorant & vulgar frascants, who being neither well
persuaded, nor at all experienced, in the light and po-
wer of this truth, thinke it something with the most,
for any man to secure his owne soule of his eternall
salvation: oh, say they, you must not perswade, but have a
good hope, that all shall be well, it is too much to say more.
And is it soe indeede? why then there is noe more safer,
or faster hold, of heauen, & everlasting pleasures, then of
the temporary vanities of the world, for a man may
say soe much of them; it is not sin, to hope that such a
ship

THE BEST MERCHANTS.

Noe's adventure 33

ship shall come safely to her port; and may noe more be sayd of the *immutable things of God*, then of the *worldly mercabates*, which have for many waies, and meanes, to miscarry. Are your conceits for *gross*, & *confused*, that they can put *no difference* (nor vnderstand the difference, *Christ himself hath put*) betweene the things that *perish*, and those that *cannot perish*? is it all one, to trade with *God*, and *man*, in *heaven*, and in *earth*? in *feeding*, *corruptible*, and *transitory trash*, and in that *enduring substance*, which will outlast, both *heaven* and *earth*? How prejudiciall are these *foolish sayings* to his *wisdom*, who evermore make's it a property, incommunicable, a prerogative *royall*, to *spirituall things* to be *firm* and not *fading*; and labour's (*hereupon*) to *wynn* our hearts vnto them, vpon this consideration, that they are for *certaine*, & *sure*; & to *draw*, vs from all things here below, because they are for *bristles*, and *unsounde*? How apparantly, opposite is this speech to that of the *Apostle*, who tell's vs, that he was perswaded (and that thoroughly) that *Neither life, nor death, nor angells, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature*, (if any other could be conceited) *could separate him from the love of the Lord Iesus*, in whom he *liueth*, (not only of himself) but of *all the elect of God*, that we are made *more then conquerours*, through him that *loved vs*, and in this especially shewed his love vnto vs, that he *vnderwent*, the *death* (& that most willingly) of whatsoever was *indeede dangerous*, and by soe doing, brought vs from vnder the *misable freedome* of the first, *Adam*, to be free from *mutability*, and *miscarriage* any more, vnting vs to himself, that (in the second *Adam*) we might be *safe*, and *sounde, for ever*.

Rom. 8.

12. 36.

11. 37.

E

Let

Note.

Let this be *remembered* of vs, and *magnified* by vs, in him our Lord who hath done soe great things for vs, as to make vs (in *this thing*) to be more *happy*, then he, who was created in absolute *happines*: he was *without sin*, yet *not sure*, we are *sure*, though *not without sin*: his *perfection* (without *Christ*) made him not free from *mortality*, & we (by *Christ*) are *immortal*, notwithstanding all our *imperfections*. Soe, now we trade vpon *better*, (that is vpon *safer*) tearmes then he did, we cannot be soe *iuncent*, of *evil*, but we are more *absolute* in *good*, then he was: he no sooner began to deal with God, but he *brake* straight; we are secured from the first instant of our beginning, that we shall *never finally faile*.

Thus we see, this is the *first priuiledge* of the *first sort*, wih your *merchandise hath*, & Gods hath *not*. ADVENTURES are EVILS, and therefore they are not incident to *this trade*, though to *your* they be.

But this is but the *first*, and the beginning of the benefit of this trade, let vs looke further for more encouragement to this celestiall *commerce*, and the further we goe, the more good shall we still be sure to see. Set we then towards a *second*, and that is this:

a.
Prive-
ledg.

That as there is no *hassarde* in this heavenly trade, but all come's safe to hand, soe neither is it possible to make a *bad debt*, in all that we deale for.

Noe BAD DEBTS can be made in this busines, nay, no debts can be made which are *not exceeding good*, yea better, then all the *ready money* in the worlde, if it were all *due to one man*.

And this help's on the happines of the former, for it all should come well, arrive safely, and we should (when it hath passed all *for dangers*) endanger it our selues, in *selling* it, to entrusty *buyers*, who should not

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pay currently, where were the *comfart* of the former *sale*? where were the future *benefit* of the *commodity*?

But if a man have it in *full possession*, and sell it to such as will make *sure payment*, then is he happy, and hath his hearts desire.

And here it is *foe*, and it cannot be otherwise; for why? who doe we *trust* in all we trade for? even HE alone is *trusted*, whose payment cannot be *misstrusted*: we trust none but GOD, to whome we should be guilty of fearful *blasphemy*, if we should harbour in our hearts, one *jealous*, or *suspicious* thought of inconstancy; he being *our* [*whose compassions run out*], None but the Lord is our *Debtor* in the managing of this business: he who is *rich in mercy*, Lord over all, *able* unto all, *able* enough to pay; and as *willing* as he is *able*, to give us content, nay (*beyond that*) more than we can *zite*, nay (*beyond that too*) more than we can *renew*.

Lam. 3. 22

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We heard what *alms* *security* he hath given us, by himself, by his *son*, by his *spirit*, by his word, by his oath, by all (*to move that*) that we could *demand*, or desire, to satisfy us. We all know, there can be no *bad debt*, if the *debtor* be *good*, how then is there a *possibility* of any to be founde here, seeing we trust nothing upon any; but upon him, upon whom (*as for*) we put all our *trust*: who although he by *not* be any *rich* that we can *claime*, or *challenge* a *debt* to any man, as owing any thing (by due) to his *creature*, but (contrariwise) that all the world are *in debt* to him, and owe him infinite *debts*, which are simply *repayable* (on our part) unto him, if he should *see fit*. Yet it pleaseth him to make himself, and to *manifest* himself to be *our Debtor*, and of his owne *mere* grace, and love, he will be *for*, assuring us that we shall be *paid* *unto the full*, yea, & that with *un-*

speakeable *superplus*; and advantage.

Pr. 16. 17 He is content it should be sayd we lend vnto him, [He that is merryfull at the poore, lendeth vnto the Lord] and that he wilbe our paymaster, [and the Lord shall repay vnto him what soeuer he layeth out] And the payment he make's, the satisfaction and contentment he gives, is such, and soe excellent, as would (if we had vnder- stood it) make vs ever more desire to haue him more, and more, in our debt; happy is that man that hath, or can haue, most debts standing out with God; the more, the better, he that is deepest in, is vndoubtedly most happy; and that for one speciall, and remarkable reason, worthy of everlasting remembrance and obseruation; and that is this. That to whome soeuer he lendeth

Note.

All bad debts come by trusting the world, or the Devil, or our selves, either our riches, or our strength; for not one of them is worthy of any confidence; they are all *thine*, so farre from *infallibility*, that they who most depend vpon them, shall finde nothing but vanity & deceit in them. But he that relyeth vpon the *living Lord*, as sure as the Lord *liveth*, that man shall be satisfied. There are few men to whom *faith* is *debt*; but he payes them *double*, as he loveth him, who putteth his

Note.

Smashing they have in hand, they are presently
payd

THE BEST MERCHANDISE 2424 Bell

payed in *now*, even in this world; and in fact *time* is
he knowes may doe them *wo*ght; and with such *elo*
ther is *ward*; or *ward* and comfort (or it may be *few*
of both *for* *us*) as they are *most* *ye* *cor* *re* *u* *er* *er*; and
shall be *most* *happy* to *live* *in* *him* *will* *be* *his* *own*

Something is still *fitting* to them, and remaineth to be reserved in heaven; and that is the infinite glory, blisse, and felicity, which *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, & the blessed *Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles*, and those innumerable spirits of just and perfect men, doe enjoy, with all whom we shall sit downe in that kingdom; and beholde the *Lord of life*; and *king of glory*, face to face; and partake those incomprehensible *happinesse*, which are reserved for vs (with them) the re-

The *leaf* the Lord doth *under* rows, (even of these
so beforable *days*) is more satisfaction then we have, (or
can have) right vnto; but the *leaf*, (whether it be of
grace or of glory) doth exceede not only our right, but
even our *thoughts* also. And hence it is, that we are (with
for good reason) soe often *taught*, and *taught* by the
holy Ghost, to Trust in the Lord; yea, [to trust perfectly
in him] to cast all our cares vpon him; to [commit both our
wayes and our selves, to him] and we are also *taught*
that [it is better to trust him then to trust in man]; and yet we
would thinke our *deeds* good; and our *works* fine; if a
Prince were to be our paymaster, well such David is
better to trust in the Lord, then in Prince; he speakes
it self, that we may know he is well *delivered*, and
well *assured* of it; and to hartne vs here vnto, he vnder-
taketh we shall never be confounded, or a shamed
of our *affaires* in the Lord, who neuer faileth, Feb. 13. 3
or *forgetteth* any one that truly repositeth his trust
in him.

Hb. 10.

In him, and therefore would not have vs cast away our confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. And none could speake this better then they that have tryed it, as both David, and Paul, & other of Gods saints have done, & in like manner shall all saints doe if they can finde occasion to *doe for*, they shalbe sure to have occasion to *say for*.

With men, it is good (yea, be the men never so good, and sufficient) to *get in debts*, because their state is *mutable*, their *wealth*, or their *will*, *moveable*; and it may quickly come to passe that they *cannot*, or *will not pay*, but with the Lord it is good to *get in debts*, for the *longer* it run's, the *longer* shall our reward be, (if not before) yet at the *resurrection of the iust*, we shalbe sure to have it to the *full*, yea, (as was noted before) *infinitely farre* beyond all *fullness*.

Note.

Again (which is yet more, and therefore to be more marked of vs) his payment, shall not rest only in our *selues*, the whole benefit of it shall not be *ours alone*, but it shall extend to *self* and reach to our *posterity also*; and this is much more then any *man* will doe at any *time*, but yet more then God will doe at *all times*, having protested his favour & respect to a *thousand generations of them that love him*, & told vs (many a time) how well *they* have to fare for their fathers *saies* [The righteous is mercifull &c] (saith David) & *his seed shall enjoy the blessing*; and againe [Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord] &c [his seed shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of his just shall be blessed]. How good would y^e have been if

It is *express* with men, and as much as either *law*, or *conscience*, doth require and command; that a man pay to *one*, if the debt be due to the *same*, (and *debt* discharged) the creditor needs not conferre any thing

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thing vpon the *childe*, being no way bound to pay *one debt*, to more then *one party*, but God will be *superabundant* in what he doth, no man shall be such a *paymaster* as he is, for beside the full, yea infinite comfort, & contentment that the *father* shall receiue, or hath received, the *childe* shall also reape some good thing from God; because he was debtor to his *father*. The Lord but neuer in debt to any one; but he payd more then one; as the scriptures doe most abundantly testify.

Againe, whereas among men there can be noe possibility of a *bad debt* to be made, but the same must arise, either out of the *ability*, or *inability*, of the *debtor*, that decayeth in *riches*, or *both*, we may be the more certainly assured, that as in this *merchandise* there is none, soe neither can there be any, because this God whom we only and wholly trust, who is to be blessed for ever, cannot faile in either of these. God is the *only debtor* here, he maketh himselfe soe; what hart of any man (vnlesse of an *infidell*, or *heretic*, or *pagan*) can conceiue, in the Lord, a possibility of faile, in *power* or *truth*, that he should be any way incident to faile, in *favour*, or in *faithfulness*? Can it enter into the soule of any man, or may a thought herof haue any place, and entertainment with a *Christian*, that he that is *alme*, should be *interrupt*, either by *necessity*, or any other *means*? It were a most *impious*, & *prodigious* apprehension. How should he want *ability*, in whome is all *infinity*, yea and all *full infinitenes* also? How should he want *truth* or *faithfulness*, to keepe *truth* with vs, whose honour it is, (and *ever hath bene*) to holde with all, who ever deale with him, whose testimonies are *very sure*, yea most *sure*, and neuer fayling, noe not in any one, to whome (in the *best thing*) he was ever pleased to engage himself.

Gen. 17.

Is he not *God* sufficient? Is he not *Abraham's* yea, in who hath all, *all sufficient* in him the whole world can witness this (*most truly*) as they are *creatures*: and millions of men (*more comfortably*) as they are *Christians*. He never did, as many men doe, run *more in debt*, then they are *worth*, or have where with to pay: his debts are not of any necessity, as (most mens are), but he wil be a *debtor* only to whome he *pleaseth*, and none els; and those to whome he is *soe*, shall well see he doth not, nor cannot disappoint them.

For why? (*consider I pray you*) most men have power to *make debts*, and to get in with many, but what man can *make money* to get out, & give satisfaction withall: if *this* were also in every mans power, who would be *annoyed*, *imprisoned*, *discredited*, and *troubled* for non-payment? he were a man worthy of *our pity*, but of *all extremity*, that having a *myne*, & a *myne*, would yet *lie by us for debt*: why the Lord our God, he hath *all this*, he hath as much power to get us of debt, as *pleasure* to get in: rather then any shall *faile*, he can *create* new comforts, and *myne* new mercyes, if the fullnes of those (*already being*) should *faile*: it is *easy* with him to make as many *worlds*, as there are creatures in the world that is *made*: no, no, the Lord hath tyed himself by such an *indefeasible band*, that there can be no *cause*, (nay no colour) of suspicion of any feare hereof saying, *Once have* ps. 89.38 *I sworn that I will not faile*. The heavens must wait their fall: the earth, the ayre, the sea, their abundance; all worlds must be *employed*, ere the least of those that rely vpon him shall goe away *disappointed*. He hath spoken, & will not depart from it (saith David), he never went from his word yet: all his words are faithfull and true, for he is *awakened*, he *travels* & *faithfull* *ministers*: he is God

who

THE BEST MERCHANDISE, *Not Bad Debts*

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who cannot lye, as we have heard enough before: his word being *most true*, himself *more*, even *more* it self what place is left for any probability, of *doubt*, *fallow*, *assault*, or *fear*, in our hearts?

Now then, seeing all ill debts, come *some* of these wayes, and *none* of these, are any way incident to the Lord, they that trade here, may well, and truly saye (even out of *happy experience*) that *this merchandise* is (in *this respect*) farre better then the *merchandise* of *Gold* or *silver*, because here is no occasion of *distress* to any *creditor*, in any debt he hath made, but the same is *good*, and *current*, he is sure to have it, with wonderfull *advantage* & benefit. God is *capable* of no *necessity*: nor *culpable* of any *fraudulency*, he cannot *over-trade* himself, or be *over-seene* in any thing he dealeth with vs for; how then should any thing be *unsure*? Who here among men that mourneth not to see the *lamentable catalogues* that come dayly both of *bad debts*, and *debtors*? I say of *both*, for every *bad debt*, doth not argue a *bad debtor*; the Lord may lay his hand vpon some, and disable them to satisfy, where they have received, which thing they would most willingly doe, were it in their *power*, and it doth not a little *perplex* them that it is not. The *debt* (in this case) may be *bad*, but soe is not the *debtor*, who not being any whit lesse *honest* in heart, but more *poore* in estate, (and that by the hand of God) cannot be sayd to be *bad*, vnllesse it be in the construction of those *base earth-wormes*, who make the world their cheifest good, hating *poverty*, as men doe *thevery*. These (as wee sayd before) are the true *objects* of Gods compassion, & *manys* comiseration, and he hath no *Christian heart*, who lendeth not a hand, (so farre as he may) to *lift* vp such, as the Lord hath

F

thus

thus humbled; But for others, who are truly called *Bad debtors*, from whome, God hath not taken *sufficiency of meanes*, but the *Diuell* hath rob'd them of *bounty of minde*, to retayne that money to enrich themselves, which *others* ought, (by vnderstandable right) to receiue from them; what should I say, but what the *Apostle* once sayd, [*Their money perish with them*], & they with their money, who thus *gain* it, & *retayne* it: yea, without *repentance* to God; and *restitution* to men; they shall *surely* perish, for the curse, (even the *curse*) of God, cleaveth both to *it*, and *them*.

The catalogue of these *causes* increaseth daily, it is long enough (I thinke) to reach from *hence* to *hell*, whereinto they shall all be cast, and be accursed for ever, who vpon *pretended poverty* of their owne, doe really rob, & impoverish many. The *Diuell* himself was never so *bad* as to make himself *worse* then he is, as he hath taught these *vill wretches* to doe: it is his manner many times, to make himself *better* then he is, (for his advantage) but never *worse*; but these wretches, will sayne to be *poore*, and *penurious*, even in *despight* of God, and his good providence, who hath *taken* nothing from them, but *gives* them enough to give men their owne, which because they will not doe; he hath pleaseth to give them over to this *new-founde*, & most *notorious* villany, that their *style* should be like the *dragons*, to draw *soe* many downe, as must *fall* by their *rising*.

But of all those that ever had to doe with God in this *worldly* life, can one be named (in the whole worlde, or any age, or time thereof) whome he sayed fully to satisfy according to *promise*, and *kindnes* too. All the *Diavels* in hell cannot instance any *one*, soe exact & most absolute, hath the *faithfullnes* of God ever beene to all

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Nob Bad Buyes

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to all his, in all things. Sooner shall the sun faile to give vs light, and the day to follow the night, then our God (*if he will be our debtor*) will sayle vs one jot: God himself hath sayd it, we may therefore *safely* beleuee it, and with joy settle our hearts vpon it.

If we should, (nay if we could), suruey the *recesses* of Gods seruants, and take knowledge, what they themselves haue *freely* confessed, *freely* to haue received, it would soone appeare, that they haue had more then they can *fully acknowledge*, and beene made partakers of more then they could aske, or thinke, and that *Eph 3.20.* not a *little*, but *abundantly*, yea exceeding abundantly too, as the *Apostle* witnesseth. Nay if we enter *seriously*, and search *narrowly*, into our selves, we could not but confesse our *recesses* of kindnes, and comfort from God, to be *many* more then we can *number*, or account.

But we take too *little* notice (which is our *great sin*) of what God doth *call vpon* vs, that we are not able (as we ought) to *call it vpon*, & *feelingly* to confesse it, either vnto the Lord, for the *lauding* of his name, or to men, to *leade* them on, to the sounde comfort, and benefit of this confidence.

And this is the *second* euill, incident to your *merchandise*, but exempted from this. Let vs come to enquire ter a *third*.

Thirdly, in this *merchandise*, there are NOE BAD 3. *Prove:* COMMODITIES: *nothing ill* conditioned, *nothing ledg* that is counterfeited, or sophisticated, or that will shrink in any measure, but all that come's to this *test*, *is true*, *merchandise*, and as it ought to be, in every respect.

Noe man neede feare, either *thick*, or *colour*, *lengths* or *breadths*, *matter* or *nothing*, all is true, sufficient and

without any fault, or exception.

And this you may well, and willingly beleeue, if you doe but remember what is the only commodity in request here, even [GRACE] soe saith our text, the *merchandise* [THEREOF] that is, of *wisdom* and *understanding*, (named before,) and comprehending all *graces* vnder them. *This*, and *this* alone, is *salable* here, *this* (of it self) take's vp the *whole trade*, all the *doings*, is for this *one* thing, even for *Grace*, a commodity which is *originally*, and *infinitely* seated in God himself, and *graciously* dispenced vnto vs, according to that measure thereof, wherof we are most *capable*, and wherin we may be most meete and able to honour him, who is the *fountain* of the same.

And how is it possible, that any of this should not be *exceeding good*, when it flowes from the *Lord himself*, & by him is derived, & communicated to vs, through the purchase of Christ, by the power of the *holy ghost*: shall we thinke that

either, this *fountain* can yeelde any thing that is *corrupt*,
or, that *Christ* would buy that for vs which were *naught*.

or that the *holy ghost* would convey any thing, to vs which is not *good*?

Farre be all such impious, and unholy apprehensions from vs, as (at once) to *blame*, yea to *shame*, the *blessed unity*, & to lay any imputation of *falsehood* vpon God the *father*, or of *feebleness* vpon God the *son*, or of *weaknes* vpon the *holy ghost*: all which (yet) were most true, if any *Grace* that came from God were vnfounde. Soe that in this trade there is no trash, or ill conditioned commodity, offered to any.

THE BEST MERCHANDISE.

How Bad Wares

45

But in yours is much, yea, (if yours, and all mens generall complaints be true) *too much*, he must be *some-body* that most soe farre see into a thing that he may not be deceived *now dayes*, inasmuch as many are growne from being CRAFTY MASTERS, to be MASTERS OF CRAFTY and to liue, and gaine more by their *Wits*, in making a *false* commodity, then ever they did by the *Worth* of a *true*, studying how they *may*, yet denying that they *doe*, deceiue. For that is the manner of all *Satans* art-men, that their *practise* goes before their *profession* in euill, but in good, their *profession* goes not only before *practise*, but *without* it also, because *practise* neuer *selues*. In *diabolicall* dealings they ever *practise*, seldome *professe* in *diuine* affayres, they ever *professe*, seldome, nay neuer *practise*.

And, as much of your *bad ware* is soe *cunningly*, & *artificially* handled, that it is not, nor cannot be easily discerned, but is *taken*, (or rather *mistaken*) for good. Soe is it in this merchandise, (by *Satans* *subtily*, and *mens* *simplity*) come to passe, that many are deceived with the *appearance* of grace, where the *substance* is not. The apostle tell's vs that [*Great is the mystery of Godliness*] and so indeede it is, & *too great* for vs to know & learue as we ought: and as true it is, that *great is the mystery of Godliness* (though nothing so *great*, as the other) yet too great, for vs to know, and shun as we should. *Hypocrisy* is spun with a *fine shreed*, and made as *fine* as is possible, to deceive the simple, and it doth *indeede* delude the greatest part of the *Christian* worlde, misleading most men, and making them to think they have *saueing*, whenas (*intrust*) they have naught but *deceiuing* Grace; that is, that which they thought was *true grace*, but were deceived by it.

Howbeit

Howbeit yov most know that, *this* is not the *merchandise* meant here in our text, all *bad wares* come out of the *Devells Wardhouse*, and *his* they are. Now because they are soe deceivably made, as that such multitudes are *gall'd* with them, it shalbe good for vs, and it wilbe *well worth* our labour, and learning, to endeavour (as every mā doth in his *owne element*) to get some skill to discern betweene *true* and *false* Grace, that you may be able to put a difference betweene, that which is *sound*, and that which is only *seeming*. And soe much the more doth it stand vs vpon, soe to doe; because if we be deceived in this *one thing*, we are vtterly *vndon* for ever, and if we be not, we are *made* for ever, and ever.

Let vs fall to it then, and looke well about vs, for though here be more *difficuly*, then in the most cunning *collusion* of any temporall commodity; yet is it no *impossibility* to try it out most manifestly vpon good advise, and diligent search. Some few things we will note therefore wherein

Gods true commodities, and

Satans sophisticated vanities

may be well knowne one from another, though they seeme to be both *alike*, both in matter and colour. Among others, note these *three*.

1.
Diffe-
rence

1. *Seeming grace* come's not from the same *fountain* that *sound grace* doth,

They have not one *father*, nor one *author*: that which only *seemeth* is from *below*, and it is carnall, sensuall & diuclish, as the *Apostle* speaketh: but that which is *substantiall*, cometh downe from *above*, from the father of lights, from whome cometh every good and perfect gift, as the same *Apostle* doth also witnes.

1. Cor. 3. 13

1. Cor. 1. 16

But,

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But it may be, (some will say vnto vs) this is most true that you say. yet are we not the wiser, for we know not how to know, which is from *above*, which is from *below*. Yea, but you may if you doe carefully marke, whither it *scendeth*, how it *worketh* in man. For as naturall things doe tendeth their owne *center*, soe (in like manner) doe supernaturall things evermore incline to their owne *author*, whence they came *originally*. That saving grace which is from *above*, will carry a man *upward* in all respects, it will make him

heavenly minded towards God.

heavenly minded towards men.

heavenly lyued before God and men.

The affection, the communication, the conversation of that man who hath it, wilbe all of things that are *above*: doe but marke well how *kindly*, *holy* speeches fall from him, what occasions he *takes*, nay, (rather then faile) what occasions he *makes*, to vent his graces, that he may employ them to the *glory* of the *giver*, & the *good* of every *bearer*, all that flowe's from him will fly *upward* as the sparks doe, that is *naturally*, *freely*, and of it owne accord: that which is *found* and came from God, will to God againe, from whome it *first* came.

But that which is from *below*, (though it have *some* *show* as if it were from *above*) hath not this property, to *ascend* freely of it self. Indeepe *Satan* *forceth* the hypocrite many times to seeme very pious, and exceeding zealous, and the hypocrite, *forceth* himself to the *utmost*, that he may appeare vnto men, soe to be, & by them be apprehended, & taken, for a *true* *professore*. And to this end he arme's them with all *infernal* subtilty, & cunning, to counterfeit the carriage & demour of the dearest, and most conscionable saints of God.

God. But wise, and wary observation, will soone detect this wicked, and *diabolical* juggling.

For why? they cannot but bewrayed, if we note, either, the *time* of the continuance

or, the *manner* of *vitrance*, of these things. For all that is done by this *seeming* grace, being but strayned, and forced, we know that [*It has former as violent, cannot be permanent*] for some time it may *bolde*, to delude others: but it cannot *holde out*, to discharge themselves, either in the sight of God, whose pure eyes doe peirce into the depth of their *consequence*; or before the face of such men, as keepe a wakefull and jealous eye, vpon their dayly *carriage*, especially in matters of religion.

Or put case, it make some sorry shift to shuffle out a little longer then ordinary, yet during the rearme it abideth, this *outside* grace, hath not that *free*, *frequent*, & *native* operation, neither doth it worke soe kindly, or flow from the hypocrite with that facility *as any time*, that it doth from the faithfull *as all times*. There is allwaies as much odds (to the eye of an experienced, and vnderstanding christian) as betweene the water that *falleth* from heaven, or *floweth* out of the earth of it self, without mans eudeavour, and that, which is *drawne* out of the earth, & sprinkled vpon it, by great paynes & labour. The *disssembler* knowe's this to be vnderstandable, inasmuch as his *borrowed* Grace doth not, nor cannot, beare vp his hart to heaven, or call him *in secret* before the searcher of all harts, without, and beyond, *any notice* of man, to humble & abase him before the higest majesty, and to rayse him againe with those inward and vnknowe cōsolations, which *only* they that are *intimate* with their God, doe finde

THE BEST MERCHANDISE.

No. 10. 10. 10.

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finde and feele. Noe, his Grace (*like a carcase*) must have some other *impulse* canse to mooue it, for of it selfe it cannot finde worke for it selfe. But that which the Lord giveth vnto any, he doth ever draw it againe to himselfe; and his spirit from whence (as from a *fountain*) it issued, is ever causing the *Grace* to run from whence it came, and the same spirit will still be pressing and provoking that *gracious* hart, towards those blessed things that are above, by the secret and silent motions of the same; and vpward will the minde mount, with all alacrity. *From* God it came and *to* God it will goe.

2. *Seeming* grace, as it come not from the same spring, soe neither doth it run through the same channel that *sound* grace doth.

2. *Disgrace*

It is not wrought in any man, by the same meanes that true grace is: and the careful search of *this*, will soone shew whence it is: Doe but aske and enquire diligently *whence* he had his grace? *how* he came by it? and *when*? when was the time? what was the *meanes*? who was the *instrument* of that which he hath. The Lord doth worke noe grace in the harts of men, but by the ordinary meanes he hath assigned and sanctified thereunto, *to wit* by his word, in the ministrey thereof. And the *works* of his spirit with his word for the begetting of grace, he doth compare and assimilate (in the scriptures) to such things as wherof, it is an vnder impossibility to be insensible, or to let them slip, out of *minds*, and *memory*.

Among many other, we may note that the conversion of a sinner to sanctification, is likened to two observable things, that leaue everlasting *impression* in the soule of man during all his dayes: *namely*, to a

G

mans

mans marriage: and a womans *Trouble*: and that because in the first moment of true grace received, we are *espoused* to the Lord, & *born* *new* into holynes. And who is he or she that can let goe the memory of either of these remarkable things? Can we be united to the Lord Iesus, and not know how it came? Can we be disburdened of soe many mighty impieties as must *out*, when grace gett's *in*, and be ignorant of their departure? in both, *our* *sanctity* be entertayned and *Satan* abandoned, without feeling? did the one ever *come in*, or the other *goe out*, soe quietly? can there be such a supernaturall and divine change, and *nothing* a doe, or (at least) *so* *hile*, as that we cannot tell how it came about? *Nay*, those many & mighty *sin*s will not part from vs, nor those ceelestiall graces come *so* *practically* to vs: our separation from them, & *union* to Christ, will cost more then soe; yea they will make vs cry for very greife of hart, with *Rebecca*, *Why am I soe payned?* it is no freindly, or kinde combate, that is fought betweene *corruption* and *holynes*, when they come to dispossesse each other: noe, it is the divells manner when he must out, to *rend* and *teare* when he goe's. Now the conveyance of grace being resembled to these things, to our marriage to Christ, when he, & we are made *one*, and to the misery of her that *travails* when she, and her infant become *one*; let any hypocrite, shew how he came by that he hath, & discourse, of the *meanes*, and *winner*, how men are *united* to Christ, and *parted* from sin, and if he affirme he hath found *both* these, presse him in the particulars; and aske him touching the nature, and order of Gods working in these cases, and put him to it, and aske him if it be possible that a man should have the sun

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Not Bad Nayes.

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in his bosome and not have extraordinary, and unspeakable light, and heat; or be a possessor of Iesus Christ the summe of righteousness and not expresse it by rare and powerfull operations, in matters of piety and religion.

Who (in nature) hath ever lived so long, as to forgett either the time of his *travaille*, or day of his *marriage*?

I thinke the earth can hardly yeeld an *instance* of any *one* that hath done soe. Neither is it easy (if *possible*) among all the true *converts* in the world, to finde *one* that hath forgotten that he was *purged* from his sins, and *possessed* of grace; and who hath wholly let slip the remembrance of the *time, place & manner*, wherein, and whereby, this eminent, & *mighty*, worke of God, was wrought in him. Yea though it were not by any mans *publike* preaching or ministry, but by some *private* passage of reading, conference, or prayer, of *another*, or by some affliction of our *selves*, or some of *ours*, or some *other* hand of God, by which he (some times, yet much more seldome) draweth some few vnto himself. The worke of God in the *transfiguration* of a man, from sin to holines, and *translation* of a man from *Satan*, to himself, is maruelous, and must, & will, (where it is thoroughly wrought) leaue an everlasting, and *judicible* impression in the party who is partaker of it. Should a *Prince* raise a man from beggery and *basenes*, to honour & *greatnes*; or bring a traytor from the *gallowes*, to the *court*, were it possible either should be vntremembred? and can this *greater*, and farre more *glorious* worke of God be blotted out, and forgotten?

Now if being thus pressed, & put to *particulars*, the hypocrite should be (as generally they are) forward

to answer, that *such* a minister, at *such* a sermon, treating on *such* a text, discovering *such* a point, did touch & worke vpon him; then put that party to it *thoroughly* in that particuler, be earnest vpon him, to discourse of *that* point, and to signify in what *manner*, and *order* it wrought vpon him? *where* it began, *upon* what corruption it wrought, *how* it proceeded? what grace it first effected? & then *what* followed in the order, & course of that coelestiall working? and if he be any thing free of discourse (as *many* are, and *any* may be, out of some generall illumination in such passages) then, for *farther*, & *farer* tryall & satisfactiō, provoke him, & cease not till you have prevailed with him to pray, & poure out some request to God to the *same* effect, which he avouched, he once thus *felt* in himself. And either in the *former*, or in the *latter*, or in *both*, this pretended grace, will be takē *tripping*, it being but *coyned*, (though he may make the best of it, who *forged* it) it cannot goe currant with others, who are truly experienced in the power of *both*: no, no, it will *fumble*, and *founder*, & *saile*, in these practises, which must have more then *shaddowes*, to performe them, as they ought; and as they are enabled to doe, who *judeade*, have felt them.

3. *Seeming grace*, as it neither come's from the same *spring*, nor goe's through the same *channell*, that substantiall grace doth: soe neither can it (by any meanes) *performe* that, which saving grace can doe.

It is *impotent*, and wholly vnable to kill any corruption, nay, it can well away to dwell with it, yea, and to cherish and foster it also, and (to say as the truth is) it is given of *Satan*, to be the *nurse* of all grosse wickednes, which is the better conveyed, vnder the cloake
of

THE BEST MERCHANDISE.

No Bad Warre.

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of this *bastard* goodnes. But the grace that is given *Gal. 3. 17.* from God, by his *spirit*, lusteth against our *flesh*, and is impatient of the communion of any corruption, but doth continually *combate*, and *strive* with it, and conquer's, and gett's ground of it more and more, not ceasing to make a *daily*, and a *deadly* warre, against the same, without any *searces* of truce, prosecuting it with a *perpetuall*, and an *unappeasable* enmity, without all admission of *parley* for the least reconciliation.

It is also of as litle power vnto *good*, as vnto *evil*, for why? it cannot grow, or encrease therein: and no wonder, for it is but the *perewigg*, or *picture*, of that grace which is true; and you never heard that the *picture* of any mans *body*, or the *perewigg* on any mans *head* did grow, or augment (in any respect) as the *living* man did, though it might be never soe *like* him in many respects; noe, they *stand* at a stay, (as *painted trees* doe), without any mutation, or addition.

Now, doe but note these *two* in any man whome you may have cause to mistrust, take heedefull notice how *sin* *dyes*, how *grace* *growe's*, marke carefully if you can observe any corruption to *consume*, any fruit of the spirit to *come on*, and you shall not *easily* miscarry, or be deceived, in the discerning of *him*, at whome your *Christian* observation doth *ayme*. For all the *power* of men, or *policy* of diuells, is not able to give augmentation to any *counterfeit*; that which is not *true*, cannot grow, all the *wis*, and *art*, in the worlde is not able to effect it; and therefore, though, through the infernall and deceivable working of *Satan*, there may be *very much*, (yea, *soe much*) consimilitude in this *appearing* grace, that it cannot (in other respects) be very quickly, or lightly discerned from that which is *powerfull*,
yet,

yet, when the hypocrite, & the diuill haue vsed their *winest* skill and cunning, to deceiue, and combined together, how they may most cunningly *hude* that dissimulation, wherwith they *dehude* men, this one thing they can never attaine, to *adde* vnto their pretended grace, that any power of *proceeding* may be perceived in them, by him who hath a *peering eye* of vnderstanding, and lookes therewith, and not with *spels* (as men of weake sight doe) to whome *small* letters seeme to grow *greater*, and *greater*, then they are, or can be made to be.

Painted fire growes not more *hot*, neither doth *pitched water*, become more *colde*; the one *flameth* not, the other *floweth* not, more then at the *first* paynting: the artificiall and well wrought *pereweig*, (before mentioned) though it be *indeede* the hayre of a man, and may be soe exactly *closed* to his head, who weare's it for a cover to his baldnes, that it cannot be knowne, by *colour*, or *closure*, but to be the naturall hayre of his head that hath it, yet it is not his *owne*, he must (if by any accident, it fall off) cry, as the poore man did, of his hatchet that fell into the water, [*Alas it was but borrowed*] and howbeit it may be *hard*, by any other externall apparance to know it to be *soe*, yet by obseruation that it is ever of *one length*, (seing there is no possibility of *lengthening* it) it is most easy to know it to be, but as it is, not *nature*, but *aduersitiell*, noe worke of God for the bodies *necessity*, but made by *man* to cover an accidentall *deformity*: and soe being still at a *stand*, and ever of *one* and the same *size*, eyery one that obserueth, can soone see, it to be that which *iudged* it is, and not that, which it did (in some *nice* semblance) seeme to be.

2. King.
6.5.

And

And the hypocrite knowes well enough that thus it is, and that no good thing doth, or can *thrive*, within him for want of that *root*, and *mystr*, that must giue life vnto it. If one should *appeale* to the soule & aske the conscience of the most *notorious* among them, whether he found any feeling worke of God in himself, and had *now*, stronger and more powerfull operations in his hart, that his *zeale* should be more *seruent*, his *love* more *affectionate*, his *whole* inward man more *enflamed* after all good, more *enraged* against all evil, & that he perceived a daily *addition* of a greater measure of *sanctification*, he could not but condemne himself with his owne mouth; or, though his *impious* hart could abett, and embolden his *impudent* mouth, to bely himself, yet his *life* would bewray his grace to be *li-actesse*, inasmuch as the power of his *progresse* is palpably wanting; in *their* eyes, who doth *precisely* obserue the same.

And thus we have (by the way) a taste of some few of those *many* differences, that are betwene *true* & *false* grace, among which I have (on this occasion) observed these *three*, for the present, reserving the more full discovery hereof, to a further *time*, and *treatise*.

In the meane time, now we see, that this our heavenly traffike is *free*, from all *bad*, or *base*, or *ill-conditioned* commodityes, and that none are *saleable* here but what are *sound*, and *currant*, all other, (whatsoever it may appeare to be) is *prohibited*, and not *vendible* in this merchandizing, wherof we now speake.

It is *sound*, and *substantiall* grace, that passeth here; it is as impossible God should deceive *vs*, as that, we should deceive *him*, with any *other*; no, no, he hath no *trash*, all we trade with him for, is absolute and of the

the best.

his *golde* is [*tryed by the fire.*]

his *silver* is [*purified seaven times.*]

his [*bread* is *bread indeede.*]

his [*flesh* is *meate indeede.*]

To be *free* of the heavenly corporation of these happy merchants, (whereof Christ is the only head, & governour) is to be *free indeede*: every thing is *reall*, the earth cannot yeelde *any one* commodity for vniuersally *current*, and *stable*, as *every one* is, that we trade for here.

And this is the *third* eminent advantage of *this* merchandizing, aboue *mans*, and such an advantage it is, as *might*, and *ought* much to animate and enflame men to be dealers herein, rather then in the *richest* society vnder heaven; who would not be willing, and *free*, to buy and sell, where he knowe's he cannot be deceived, but shalbe sure of the best?

4.
Privi-
led.

We now proceede to a *fourth* preuiledge, wherein yet further this merchandise doth excell yours, and that is *this*. That in this trade there neither *is*, nor can *be*, any BAD SERVANTS, any vntrusty factors, no broaker, or agent, can deceive or abuse vs in this heavenly busines; which yet in civill and earthmerchandise is most *vsuall* all places doe swarme with deceivers, men make daily, & dolefull *complaints* that they know not *who to trust*, or how to be *secured* of that which the put into *others* hands,

But in *this* commerce, it is a meere impossibility that any one *such* should be founde, among all that ever did intermeddle in these *diuine* assayres. And least this should seeme strange or *incredible*, you may be assured of the truth hereof sufficiently, if you doe
but

but consider the *reason* of the same which (in a word) you may vnderstand to be *thus much*. That in the managing of this merchandise, no man is, or may be permitted to have his affayres ordered by *any other*, but every man is for *himself*, none els, can be for him. Noe *deputation*, or *assignment* of any, is allowable, by the tearmes of this *trading*, what we doe must be done in our *owne persons*, and not put, or entrusted on any creature, either *man*, or *Angel*.

The Lord (the most wise disposer of these *divine affayres*) never gave liberty to any *free-man* of this society to take another, to doe, or deale for him, in any part of *these* passages, every particuler wherof, require's our owne *personall* presence and practise, because all *others* are incapable of this employment on *our* behalfe, and cannot doe vs any *good*, or stand vs in any *Head*, though we should *presume* to put them in our *places*.

Vndeniable evidence of scripture, and *invincible* reason doe concurre, in one consent for the justification hereof, that no man, in the managing of this divine commerce, may *juggle* in another, and *shuffle* out himself, in any thing that is here to be done; for he who put's *in* another, put's *out* himself.

The *current* of the scripture run's strong this way, let vs looke vpon the *streame*, and we shall see it will overbeare all opposition, by the voyce of God, who by all his holy ones, hath left his mynde written touching this matter.

By *Solomon*, who sayth: [If thou be wise, thou art wise for thy *self*.]

Pro. 9.12.

By *Hosea*, who adviseth all people to [*Save* to themselves in *righteousnes*.]

Hos. 10.12.

H

By

By *Christ*, who exhorts vs to [*Lay up treasures*
for our selves.]

By *Paul*, who tells vs that [*Every man must give*
account to God for himself.]

And many more whose testimonies it is needles
now to multiply vnto you, by innumerable instances,
which might be produced, if there were any reason to
doubt, or demurre of this: but soe farre is it from that,
that all reason doth assent vnto it also. God thinks it
unreasonable that any man should *drive* this trade, doe
this busines, by *another*, or by any but our selves, and
we cannot but be of the same mynde, (and thinke it
good reason) if we minde well, these few considerations
that follow.

1. These things are too *high*, excellent, and pre-
cious, too *heavenly* in their nature, too *heavy* in
their weight, to be committed to the care of
any, but our selves, vpon any tearmes.

The *least* of those things that belongs to this bu-
sines iye's vpon our *life*, yea it concernes our *eternall*
life, (which is infinitely more then our *natural*) the
happy *gaine*, or wofull *losse*, of our everlasting blisse,
and being with God in the inconceivable ioclicities
of heaven, for ever and ever stands vpon our *well*, or
ill looking to our estate in these passages. If we loo-
ke *well* to it, it cannot but be *well* with vs; but if we
fayle herein, we are *undone* in body & soule for ever,
heaven is *lost*, we are *lost*, there is noe prison, or pu-
nishment for such as *breake* in this trade, but *hell*, from
whence it is grosse folly, to have one hopefull thought
of any *recovery*.

Now, what man is there (*among men*) so slight, and
carelesse, that in matters of this weight, and impor-
ta nce

tauer, wherein, and wherevpon, all happines, or misery doth consist, and wilbe assuredly consequent, will repose trust in another, and cast the care of his *present*, and *future* state, vpon any *agent* whatsoever? we would deeme it no discretion to doe it in temporall things, whether naturall, or artificiall, if either did touch our liues: and is it not monstrous dotage, to offer it in these *spirituall* things, the *means* whereof, carryeth greater consequence then the *whole world* and all things therein, can doe.

Things of common and ordinary rate, which reach not to our *making*, or *marring*, we dare cast vpon *others* men, but of the *major*, we wilbe respectiue, and looke to *thus* our selves, not trusting to *others* eyes, (save in petty things) but our *owne* shalbe *jealous*, and vigilant. But in this *merchandise*, of grace nothing is *mean*, or vnworthy, of our most serious care and consideration not a commodity we meddle withall but *all* *his*, vpon it, & the *least* of these, doth as farre exceede the *greatness* of the earth,

as the *scale* doth the *body*.

or *eternall* life, doth our *naturall*

or *beauen*, the *world*, in happines.

or *hell*, our temporary *crosses* and *losses*, in vn-happines.

There is not, neither can be, any proportion or comparison conceited betweene these, the one being so incomparably beyond the other in all *excellency*, *commodity*, and whatsoever else may be apprehended to make a thing *essentially* happy.

Who then can, or will, rest vpon others in these things, which are of so high a nature, so absolute necessity, so excellent in advantage, so miserable in da-

No Bad Servants. THE BEST MERCHANDISE

mage? surely none that *base reason* in himself can see reason, to doe thus.

2. As the things are *too high* to be trusted vpon others, so is God (with whome alone we haue to doe, *hercin*.) *too good*, to be serued by any *underlings* of ours.

He is *most worthy* that we should our selves, in our *owne person*, (and that in all the *powers of our senses*) serue him in these assayres: and we are *most unworthy* (at our best) to deale with him; how then can it be *sollerable*, that we should set others about it? we our selves are but *servants*, in this negociation (he only that is in heaven is a *Master*) and shall we appoint him other *servants* of ours, and set them a worke in this soe worthy an employment, wherein the *best* of vs is *too bad*, and vnworthy to intermeddle. Dare any subject offer this to his *Prince*, to send another in his place, at what time our *owne presence* and *attendance* is required, and that *then*, when the *honor* of his crowne, and *safety* of his person, is to be preserved, The *majesty* of a mortall man cannot endure any such *deputation*, as to be serued at *second hand*, by their *inferiours*, who are his *immediate officers*. And doe we dreame that the *biggest majesty* of the immortall God (who is soe high and excellent) can brooke to be thus *basely* abused of vs, that we should turne those that *serue us*, to *serue him* for vs.

Every where, we are called vpon in our *owne persons*. [*Thou shalt doe this or that*] no where is it allowed that, [*Thou shalt doe it by another, or another shall doe it for thee.*] The Lord hath not dealt *soe* with vs, as by any *other*, either in heaven or earth, to *redeeme* vs, but by *himself*, yet all men know, he might, and could,

(had

(had he soe pleased) have done vs all good, by *other* meanes, then his *owne* immediate working, yet he would not, but did it *himselfe* to give vs an ensample, and by this blessed worke of his owne, to vpbraid (most righteously) all such as should dare *thus* impiously to degenerate from soe dealing with him, in their bounden duty, as he hath done with them in his *marvellous* and most *abundant* mercy.

3. The advantage of *another* mans industry, cannot (by any meanes) be made *ours*, in this merchandise.

There can be noe kinde of *conveyance* made, that is good in *law* (I meane in *Gods law*), whereby the grace that *another* getteth, may become or be made over to us: that which he *is*, and that which he *doe's*, is for *himselfe*, and it is his *owne*, no other man is capable of the comfort, or commodity of it; inasmuch as in all Gods courts of justice, there is no *Office* of alienation, from one's selfe, and of a *signation* to *another*, our owne graces remaine for ever *inseparable*, to our selves, or, (as I may say) *incommunicable* from our selves; if we have *faith*, it is our *owne*, we have it to our selves, and we live by it, it fareth with our *spirits*, as with our *naturalls*, that as we cannot *breathe*, or *see*, or *speak*, or *live*, for another, but the benefit of all these is our *owne* only; soe neither can we *believe*, or *hope*, or be *humble*, or *zealous* for any but our selves alone: these *treasures* admitt no *transfession* to any, they cannot be conferred upon *others*, we are most sure to enjoy all the happines of our graces, in our owne *hearts* only, without sharing any jot, or whit thereof, with others.

Our *Romish* merchants, the *cheaters*, and *cunning-catchers*,

Others both of mens consciences, and *purfes*, tell vs that the workers of *superstition* which *fools* have done, may be cast upon others; they have a *trick*, to give one man a good *hille*, to another's good works; and know which way to put this mans *overplus*, to that mans *penury*: wherein, they are growne so *bonett*, and such *true men* of late dayes; that they tell vs but, *no lyes* at once to wit,

1. That some men have *superfluity* of good works.
2. That they may be *made over*, to others who want.

Both which how *abominable*, and *blasphemous* they are, were easy to *detech*, if it were meete to *disseffe* into a discourse of that kinde. But we needs not make use of much *wit* to refute such *senselesse* assertions; we will only (for this present) send them with their *fellow fooles*, to be answered by the *wise virgins*, of *Mat 25*; when they begged some of their oyle [Give us of your oyle &c.] they were tolde, that there was no such matter, [not soe] say they, it cannot, it may not be; we cannot give away our *grace*, we cannot (noe though we would) part with any of *that anyting* which we have received from God: you must even goe where we had ours, [and buy for your selves] as we have done.

Now had these *fooles* beene but *foe Wise*, as to have gone to *buy* to *buy*, they had beene surely sped, (but indeede there is none to be *begged there*:) yet before any *foole* ever goe, I wish him to be *wise* in *one* thing, and that is this, that, if he goe to *buy*, he make as *sure* worke for the others *piety*, as the *profit* will make for his *money*: I hope they may be taught (at least) soe much

much witt, as not
 to give something,
 to get nothing,
 and soe to verify the proverbe, that [a foole and his
 money, are soone parted.]

But we may not dwell vpon the condemnation of
 such *deale*, this one thing is most true, that it was ne-
 ver the Lords purpose, to *alter the property* of any
 mans graces, that there should be any possibility
 either, to *get them for another*,
 or to *give them to another*.

This merchandise doth not consist of any such
 mooveables, as may be shipt from one *port to another*,
 or transported from one *person*, to *another*: noe man
 hath any power

either *buy from another*
 or, to *sell to another*,
 in this trade, wherein all our dealing (touching the at-
 taining of any thing, or parting with it) is *such*, and
wholy, with G^{OD} himselfe, from *whome*, (and not
 from any *other*) we receive every grace we have, and
 to *whome*, (and not to any *other*) the fruit of it must
 returne, for the greater *substance* of his glory by
 vs, and the better *assurance* of our glory, in heaven
 with him.

Soe now, summe vp these *three items*, and see what
will will rise vpon it: namely this,
 that if God be *so* good to be honoured by *any*,
 but *our selves*,
 that if these things, be *so* good to be trusted
 vpon *others*,
 that if there be noe *communicating* of any mans
 grace, to *another*,

Then

Then must every man in his *owne person*, be an actual trader in this commerce, here the proverb hath good place, [*Every man for himself*,] in these best things, no man is for another.

And it thus it must needs be, that every man must be his *owne agent*, what feare, is there of *servants*, when a man must be vntrue, and vntrusty to his *owne bars*, and *hate* himselfe, or he cannot be badly dealt withall, and if any man should be *for*, who could pity or commiserate him that cannot be his *owne friend*, but wilbe vnfaithfull to his *owne soule*.

It is memorable that the Lord saith on *either part* by his holy *Prophets*:

the righteousness of the righteous shalbe upon himselfe.

the wickednes of the wicked shalbe upon himselfe: and that.

What we doe, for *evill*, or for *good* it returne's, and rest's vpon our *selues*.

Seing then we neede not *fear* others, let vs *care* for our *selues* to make our election sure, to worke out our *owne* salvation; and seing others cannot deale for vs, and that we cannot say (as in so many civil occurrents we can) that *others* have vndone vs, let it never be sayd we have vndon our *selues*. Yes, let vs thinke it a *happines*, and *hastily* thanke our God for it, that he hath pleased thus to appoint, that none but our *selues* shalbe trusted to doe for vs in these best blessings: we are soe much the more *sure*, and *free* of that *fear*, & *care*, which oppresseth the hearts of many in the matters of the world, least they should be deceived, and overthrowne by those, in whose hands, their *business* lye's.

And

And this is the *fourth* thing, which is proper to this *heavenly*; but not to your *earthly* tradeing.

And all these *four*, flowing from the *first* rank of those *inconveniences, evils, and damages*, which are ordinary in your trade, but not incident to *this*, yours being full of them all, this being free from every one of them: hence it is, most apparant that in these regards, *this* commerce doth exceedingly surpass your, inasmuch as nothing is to be found in it, which may put a man in any feare, of *losse*, or the least disadvantage whatsoever.

For why? we see,

All is safe at sea, there is no *adventure*,

All is sure ashore, there is no *Bad Debts*,

All is current, there is no *Bad Commodities*,

Nothing can misfarry, there are no *Bad Servants*.

These *four* are the *diseases* of temporall dealing; all trade is subject to them all, & sick of some of them, yea any one of them alone, is able to decay, nay to destroy, all merchandising: how many, have sunke vnder the losse of *Adventures*? and others by *bad Debts*; and have not *bad Wares*, and *bad Servants* broke the backs of others?

Beholde, our merchandise is sound in all respects, and free from every of these miserable *maladies*, here is nothing *adventured*; nothing *endangered*; nothing *ill conditioned*; nothing *deceivable*: all we send ariue's *safely*, all we sell is payd for *honestly*, all we *deale* for, is good *commodity*, all we *deale* with, may be trusted for their *fidelity*.

Thus having freed this our *celestiall* tradeing from all *evils*, in the manifest and eminent exemption it

good sales. **THE BEST MERCHANDISE.**

hath, from all and every of those inconveniences, *mustered* in this *first ranke*, wherein it partaketh *now* with yours.

We are now (*by due order*) to set forward toward the *second ranke*, and therein to shew, that *as* it hath none of the *evills* yours hath, soe also, that it hath all the *good things* that yours can have; and further, that it exceedeth yours in the *goodnes* of every one of them. Looke what is *good* in yours, is *farre better* in this; you have nothing that is any way beneficiall, but the same benefit doth exceede, and superabounde in *this* busines.

And for our better *evidence* touching the full *assurance* of this truth, let vs take a view of *all things* that you account *gaynefull* and *commodious*, and see if this trade doe not exceedingly out-goe yours, in every one of those *particulars* which you repute any way *advantageous*.

There are but *three wayes*, or *meanes*, (*knowne to me*) whereby your profit and benefit come's in, namely,

Sales: of commodity for money.

Barter: of commodity for commodity.

Exchanges: of money for money.

And in all these *three*, and in each of them, it is most easy to manifest how this *spirituall* trade doth overmatch your *terrenall*,

Let vs begin with *SALES*, (and then with the other *two* in their order) and in *them*, you shall soone perceive the *perceles* advantages, that *these* traders have, beyond all that sell the *richest* merchandise vnder *heaven*: Your selling come's *nothing neere* this, and that you *your selves* woulde say, if you knew *all*.

Nay

Nay, if we instance but in a few, of many particulars, it will *seeme* be *seene*, where the odd's doth lye, even in every particular incident to your *Sales*, in any respect. For why? it is not in your power to sell.

either, *when* you will.

or, *what* you will.

or, *to whom* you will.

or, *for what price* you will.

You are free in no *one* of these, for, your *time* is stinted when you shall sell; and the *buyer* will stint you *what* you shall sell; you cannot *chuse* your merchant to whom you will sell, nor *pitch price* at your owne pleasure, how much you will have.

But the *celestiall merchant* is his owne man in every *one* of these particulars, he is admitted to make the *best* benefit he can of them *all*, and barred of none.

Let vs ponder and take notice of them *a-part*.

1. For *time* of selling, we are to know, that all *time*, every oportunity, is both *most free*, (and Advan- which is more) *most fit*, to buy and sell the *best* tinge- things.

none is exempted as *not free*, none is selected as *not fit*, it is *war-i-time* (in this merchandise) all the *yeare long*, yea, and every day of our life, is *when-day*, no man neede be out of doings an *houre* to an end, no nor a *moment*, but by his *owne* default, either in want of *pro- vidence* to foresee his affayres, or of *diligence* to follow and goe through with them.

It pleaseth almighty God to bid vs come and buy at *all times*, and all the times of *his* calling vs to buy, are also *our* seasons and oportunities of *sale*; for

we can buy nothing of him, but we must sell something to him. Now that his buying times are *perpetuall*, without the least *limitation*, or *intermission*, is a thing abundantly witnessed in the booke of God, both by Solomon, who speaketh indefinitely without determination of any time, and therein, bidd's vs [Buy the truth] at all times; and by the Prophet *Isaiah*; who make's open proclamation to all persons [Hoe every one that thirsteth &c: come buy &c.] and can we thinke that to be restrayned to any one time, which is open to all commers? And these proclamations being indefinite, and unlimited in the letter, cannot be bounded in their sense to any particuler opportunity, or set season; because it is a meere impossibility to conceive, that all can come at once: he that hath made it open for all traders, hath also made it open for all times, wherein any shall come to buy of him, according to his prescription; to wit, while he doth sell, and offer's himself to be graciously founde, of those by whome he is faithfully sought.

His ware-house is never empty, his shop-windows never downe, he keepes no holy-dages, (I meane for play-dages.) nay, the holiest times, are ever the happiest for this commercē, and when least busines of the earth is to be done; (nay when none at all, [out of the case of most vrgent necessity] may be medled withall) then is the only gainfull season, of enriching our selves, with these divine, and rare advantages. You have some dead times when there is nothing at all to doe; and some not very quicke, when there is but litle to doe, and you very often, (and too truely) complaine of both; but here is none of either, vnlesse our dead and unquicken'd hearts doe make them such vnto our selves; he, (even

our God) with whome we deale, hath nothing which he doth invite vs to buy, but the same will ever vent, and is vendible day by day: nothing of his is subject to be either out of request, or out of fashion, or to lye unprofitably vpon any mans hands that hath the same.

This vniuersall, & perpetuall, are these times wherein the Lord would have vs buy; and the same are our times, and seasons of selling, vnto the Lord. And for regardfull is he of our good, that he set's vs *no time to begin*, because, *the first day*, and *houre* we can take, is not, nor can he be soone to set vpon this blessed and most beneficiall busines, wherein whatsoever doth prosper with vs, doth abide for ever by vs.

He that hath found this pearle, went *incontinently* *Mat. 13.* to sell all he had (out of hand) to buy the feilde *44.* wherein it was hyd, he knew it to be of such worth, that he part's with *all he is worth*, to purchase it; and he was a true Merchant; for vnto *such a one* is the kingdome of heaven compared. The young man (in the same *cap. 19. 12.* Gospel) was *willed* to doe the same, but being not *willing* therevnto, he kept his base earthly trash, and for want of the true treasure, he soone became bankrupt, and lost the *wealtie* of heaven, to gaine the *peisse* of the worlde. Yea our Saviour Christ, who knowe's how to enrich vs absolutely, perswades all men to this practise, to *sell all*, and providie them bags of such treasure as cannot faile. *Luk. 12. 33.*

According to which counsell of Christ, the *new-con-* *Act. 2. 45.* *verted* Christians, began instantly in their *temporalities*, to put them away, for the purchase of these *celestiall riches*, and were content (and that *willingly* and of their *owne accord*) to let all goe, laying downe their *whole estates* (made into money) at the *Apostles* feete *cap. 4. 34.* to

to dispose as they pleased, for the common good. And as it was with these *new*, soe will it be with all *true*, *Converses*, they will never deeme any thing too *deare*, to obtaine these incomparable commodities, but let all goe and that with *all expedition* that may *possibly* be made, knowing that *delays* are most dangerous in these dealings, & that many a man hath beene vtterly *wndone* for ever, by carelesse neglect of the time he might have tooke.

Most true it is, that while *this time* lasteth, no part thereof is inhibited, but we may make vse of every *moment*; howbeit, it is as true, that this time will not *last ever*, and therefore, if we loose and let slip our opportunity, and tarry till the Lord hath *shut up*, we shalbe sure to be *shut out*, and have no entrance, and then we may goe to buy with those *fooles*, who came as wise as they went, and having once overstood this *market*, could never after get admission to come where these *happy* things were to be had. But during the dayes and meanes of grace, while the Lord offer's opportunity, (and that is for an *eleaven* of *twelue* houres in the day) we may buy and sell with him *freely*, without any such *intermissions* as men vse to make; who (as was sayd before)

Sometimes *may not* sell by order:

Sometimes *Will not*, hoping the time wilbe *better*.

Sometimes *cannot* sell, wanting a good *custo-mer*.

But here is no authority to *barre vs*, no bad time to *binder vs*, we cannot want any thing to procure our *eternall wealib*, if we be watchfull of our time, to take it while it may be had. And let vs take *very spe- ciall*

shall beed, that we doe not let it slip, because in the *losse* of it, we *lose our selves*. Seeing then, no such *casualtyes* of time are incident to this trade, let vs adde *this* vnto the *rest*, and esteeme it soe much better, then *that*, whose *seasons* and *intermissions* are in mens discretion and determination; and by how much the times hereof are *better*, let vs be more industrious to bestow them to the *best*. And this is the *first* advantage in *Sales*,

2. As you cannot sell *when* you will, soe neither
can you sell *what* you will, neither *all times*, Advan-
nor, *all things* are common in your trade. For tage.
why?

Some commodityes you *must* want, as not being within the lymits of your merchandising; *Some* you may want of those that are: it is *unlawfull* to have any of the *former*; and it is *unusuall* to have all of the *latter*. Besides, all that you have to sell must be *good currant*, and *well-conditioned*, els it will not sell, or if it doe, (through your *collusion*) you doe but deceive them that buy, and shew a *mynde* that is *naught*, in putting that vpon any man, which you know, is not *Good*.

But our sales are farre otherwise, for the greatest and *best*, are of the things that are *worst*; he is the best merchant, who sell's the *worst wares*.

This (you will say) seeme's exceeding *strange*, & Note. may well be *wondered at*, as a most prodigious *paradox*; yet is it, as *really true*, as it is *seemingly incredible*, and that we shall soone be perswaded of, if we remember our selves well, and consider, that we cannot buy any thing that is *Good*, but we must sell something of our *owne*, and what have we of our *owne*, but that which is *starke naught*, even our *sin* and *corruption*.

To

To sell that which is not our owne is no *benefity*,
(besides, in this trade it is an *impossibility*) and if we
cannot, or may not sell ought els but what is *ours*,
naughtines is all we can doe away. And *this* we sell,
nought but *this*, is in our power to part with.

The *first* father of vs all, olde *Adam*, solde, and
imbezeled away all our good, even all the glorious
(though *usable*) graces, that he (and we in him) had
from God, and left both *himself*, and *vs*, strip't bare
and naked of those *admirable excellencies*, wherewith
we were clothed in our creation; since that *day*, and
houre, we have had nothing of our owne but *evill*, *this*
only we *posse*, and *this* is that alone we *sell*.

Now least any man should thinke *thus* within him-
self, if this be all you have to sell, who *may be*, or who
wil be our merchant buyer, to bargain with vs for
any such *base stuffe*? we are to know, and vnderstand,
that

the *diuill* was not more willing to *bereave* vs of
the *best* grace we had, in our blessed estate,
then

the *Lord* is, to *receiue* at our hands, (yea and
to reward *too*, vs for,) the *worst* *evill* we
have, if we will depart with it and doe it a-
way, with *honest hart*.

Did ever any *evill* person *overlay* him yet? can
any man bring *too much* to him? was he at any time
clogg'd with the *over-abundance* of any *impious* per-
son? or hath he turn'd away or refused *one*, of *all* that
came to vnlade themselves of the *heaviest* burthens
of their most *hellish* impieties, yea though they
were

never so many in number,

never

never foe *notorious*, or monstrous in nature,

The power of the *diuell* could never infuse that abomination into vs, but the most egregious, and grossest of *all* those evils, that ever *inhabited* our flesh and blood, being *brought* before the Lord, and by vs, *unfaynedly* bewayled in his sight, was taken from vs: the records of *holy writt* doe tell vs of *some*, that were *as bad* as any might be, among *those* who might ever come to be *good*, who were disburdened of all their haynous *impieties*, and endued with many most heavenly *graces*: if I should doe more then name the *partyes*, and begin tell you (at large) their *Horres*, it would be too tedious for this time; they that have any acquaintance with the things that are *first*, & *last* written of *Manasses*, of *Mary Magdaten*, of *Paul*, (and some *others* that might be instanced) can tell you that this is an *undoubted* truth which we now *avouch*. The last of the *three*, (even *Paul*) for his part did ingenuously confesse himselfe the *foulest* sinner of all those that Christ came to *save*, and therefore give's vs a most speciall *Item*, both of the *generall proposition*, that [*Christ came into the world to save sinners*] and also, of the *particular aggravation* and *application* of it, *in*, and *to* himself [*Of whom, I am the cheefe*] that is, among all sinners that ever found grace at the hands of God, I am the *greatest*, and *grossest*, as I *my selfe*, doe judge of *my selfe*.

The man that bring's *most* corruption, is *most* welcome to this *marke*, and sure to have a *customer* for it *all*, the Lord will take from him *all* he *doth*, or *can* bring, if he have an *vpright* purpose of hart to part with it; yea let him come *as oft* as he can, and bring with him every time *as much* as he can, he shall carry

none back with him for want of *ven*, in case he doe intende *indeede* to leave it all behinde him.

The *fore-named Merchant* who is soe magnified in the gospell, is sayd to *sell all* to buy that *Pearle*: loe, he *solde all*; what *all*? even *all that he had*; why, what had he to sell of his owne, (being a finner) but *sin*? who *bought* it? why, even *he* of whome he had the *Pearle*; and soe with the sale of *all his sins* (how many, or, how monstrous soever) he *parted* with them, and made *purchase* of this invaluable *gemme*, and compasfed it into his owne *possession*, to the everlasting *enriching* of himself both in soule and body for ever.

Goe thou and doe likewise, carry *all thy corruption* to Iesus Christ, if thou come vnto him, he will not put thee away; take thy *whole load* with thee, and cast all thy burden vpon him, he hath promised to *ease* and *lighten* thee, thou shalt neither be *rejected*, nor *vphrayded*, for bringing soe *much*.

No man is *truly* miserable, but he *only* hath soe *much* as he cannot bring it, *he* who hath a hart *so sinfull*, that it will not suffer him to goe to the *Lord Iesus* to be vnladen of his transgressions; his case is *heavy*; his state is *hellish*, and lamentable. If once a mans sin be growne to that *desperate* power, and measure; that it will *ouerule* his soule, that it shall not goe to seeke meanes of freedome and release, from the bondage thereof, he is in wofull taking, for why? the *Diuell* who is soe predominant in him, as to *keepe* him from comming to *Christ*; doth *keepe* such a finner (whome he can soe witholde) for himself, and by making him incapable of the *purchase* of Christ, it is apparant he purposeth to make *prey* of him for himself.

But

But he that can come let him come, he shall returne *unladen* of all his evils, and carry *sheaves* for his *Weedes* (*even all good, for all his evill*) with him.

And is not this a *singular* benefit of *this* trade above *yours*, that whereas you must bring *commodities* to sell, we may sell our *impieties*; and whereas you often receive *bad* for *good*, we are sure to ever receive *good* (*yea the best*) for our *bad*.

3. As you can neither sell, *when* you will, nor *what* you will, soe neither is it in your power to sell to *whome* you will. 3.
Advantage.

You must *take*, and (*sometimes* *trust* too,) such as come, it is noe way possible for the *merchant-seller* to please himself, and make choyse of every *merchant-buyer*, to have only *such* as he would have: noe, *sometimes* good men come not to buy, *sometimes* they are taken vp by *others*, e're they come to *vs*; and you trade with *such*, now and then, as you take no *such* content in, but you could even as willingly they should *leave*, as *take* your commodity.

But in the sales of *this* merchandise we have *one* who is in constant and perpetuall *custome* with *vs*, who deale's most currantly, in taking of *all* we bring, vpon tearmes of *admirable* advantage: we cannot cloy him with *often* comming, or with *too much*, as oft as we come to sell; there is no neede we should feare, or care, to finde *sale*, for he will have *all* that we have at *all times*.

And that is our *good God*, he, and he alone it is, who is our *buyer*, we sell to *him*, and to none but *him*, who is *God* to be *blessed* for ever, who will carry away all that come's, and buy all that is brought to him.

And he that would wish any *other* to deale with, it

were pittie but he should *keepe* to himself, *that*, which he might sell to the *Lord*, and by retayning *that*, (the sale wherof would soe *enrich* him,) sell himself vnder the eternall curse of this God, which is denounced as most *due*, to seize vpon all *such*, as will not depart from their iniquities.

But most vayne it were to wish for any other *custo-mer* for our corruption; for none but *he* will take it from vs, if he *ease* vs not of it, we must be for ever *burdened* with it, and abide the misery, and mischeife of it.

For why? *Who* doe we thinke, we can deale *wish* all, or *who* can we thinke, *will* deale *wish* vs, in this case for our corruption?

The *Diuell* will not buy any sin of vs, he sell's it to vs, and is soe farre from *diminishing* any we have, that he endeavoureth to *adde more* vnto it, and to encrease that we have, if we have any *good*, he is ready to rob vs of *that*, or to truck with vs (by some *satanicall* *steight* or other) that we may be deprived therof: but for *sin*, he is the *sole* *founder* and *author* thereof, all we have *come*'s from *him*, & having *once* fastened it vpon vs, he will *none* of it againe, vpon any tearmes.

The *world* cannottake any evill from vs (vnlesse by *pollution*, and that make's it *more ours*, though it become, in some sort, *theirs*,) if we deale with *men*, it is easy to *get* more, but in no wise to *lesse*n that we have *already*.

It is the *almighty* only, who is our *merchant*, to him we may goe, and be sure of *sale* for all we can bring: no *other* but he, none *better* then he, to deale withall in this merchandise; he that knowe's not this, is miserably *blindefolded* of the diuell; and he that (knowing it,)

THE BEST MERCHANDISE *Good sales.*

it,) doth it not, is wofully bewitched by him, to keepe that within him, which will for ever destroy him, before *that God*, who would, (had he *enfraynedly* sought it,) have eased him of all his *evill*, and enriched him with all *good* in steed thereof.

4. You cannot sell for *what* you will, no man can *force a market*, and make it as his list, but must be content to take as the *time* will affoord. 4. Advantage.

Sometimes good *proffit*; sometimes *litle*, it may be *none*, now and then, but some *losse*, such is the vncertainty of your trading. All times doe not yeelde advantage.

But beholde, the trade we *now* treat, and talke of, is more then a *litle* better, for all the *bargaines* we make therin, are exceeding beneficiall vnto vs: and that will be easy to conceive, and beleeve, if we take notice of *two* or *three* things.

1. It is impossible we should be *absolute losers*, and have *nothing* at all, for that we sell.

And that, because we have to doe with him, who is the *fullnes* and *infinitnes* of all things; from whome (he being foe) it is simply jmpossible that *nothing* should come.

2. If we *had nothing* for what we put off, and part withall, yet could we *lose nothing*.

And that, because our sin and corruption is *lesse*, and *worse* then *nothing*; it is a happines to be rid of that which is *evill*, though *nothing* should come in place thereof.

3. That which we have for it (be it *much*, or *litle*) it cannot but be *good*.

And

And that because it come's from God, from whome as *nothing* cannot come, soe nothing but *good* can come from him, he being *Goodnes* it self.

And soe all we have is *cleare gaine*; no man that ever dealt with the Lord, ever made, either a *loosing* bargain, or but a *saving*, neither of these can be, (for the causes and considerations aforesayd:) the *least* that ever was, was *great* advantage; who can thinke it to be otherwise, that see's what he doe's, or vnderstand's, that he

sell's his sin, and
save's his soule.

And what *gayne*, yea, what *unspeakable gayne* this is, he only can manifest that *feels* the happines of it in his owne hart.

In this particuler then of *Sales*, this trade is evermore a *gaynfull* trade; and it cannot but be soe, for (if you marke it) our *texts*, make's *merchandising*, and *gayning* all *one* thing, and take's it for graunted that if a man trade he *gaines* without question, doe not the words imply it, when they run thus [For the merchandise thereof is better, &c. and the gayne thereof &c.] loe, here is nothing but *merchandising* and *gayning*, not a word of any (no not the *least*) *losse*, to any trader. They who entertayne this course of *spirituall commerce* may safely resolve on that which others *presumptuously* made account of; to wit, of [going to such a place, and carrying there, such a time, and buying & selling & getting *gayne*,] these reckoned (I say not without *their host*, but I am sure I may say) without the *Lord of hostes*, whose sufferance, and assistance, was never entertayned into their thought as a *conditio*, or *consideration* needfull to be taken with them: and therefore they

they were *sherpely* taken vp, and reprehended, because they did not, (as they ought) say, [*if the Lord* ^{7am. 4} *Will.*]

But to *us*, the Lord hath revealed his *Will* in this thing, & to encourage *us* with the *assurance* of that in this heavenly traffike, which the best earthly trading can have but in *hope*; he hath tolde vs, that if we doe *buy* and *sell*, we shall certainly get, and *gaine*: for *trading* and *gaining*, are inseparable companions in this busines.

We never read of any in all *Gods booke* but he gained; they that were the *greatest doers* doe tell vs that their advantages were better then [*thousands of Golde* ^{Psal. 119.} *and Silver*] yea and beyond all treasure. And they who have beene happily experienced in these affayres have found that *Works* of God to be true in themselves, which his *Word* hath affirmed of others.

Thus we see in the *first* of these passages that we finde in this *second rank*; (to wit, our spirituall *sales*) how well we speed, that all we *sell* is for *gaine*, and for no small *gaine* neither.

The which that we may the better vnderstand, let vs set vpon the *second* beneficiall advantage in this commerce and that is that, which you call *BARTERING*, when *one* commodity is done away for *another*.

And in this particuler we are *as farre* before you as in any other before named; nay *further* benefit and *greater* riches doth *this* way arise, then by *any* of those which we have (*hitherto*) discovered.

And the apparant truth thereof, may plentifully appeare vnto all men, in the due ponderation of *one thing*, which if it be well weighed, will sway with vs, and

& perswade vs fully of the same. And that (in a word) is this. *val (in quo vultis) . . . non libi*

That whereas in all civill *barterers* which are made betweene man and man, *one good thing* is set against *another*, and one *commodity* is exchanged for *another*; In this blessed tradeing it is *not soe*, but in the *barterers* betweene God and man, the Lord give's vs *good* for *evill*, and putt's *his graces* vpon vs, for the *impieties* we put of to him.

The *world* doth not yeeld *such* traffike, it is not to be had among *men*, if any merchant should doe away a *currant*, *Haple*, and *well-conditioned* commodity, for some baggage stufte, that were *base*, and not *vendible*, it would be imputed to him either for *egregious* *falls*, or *grosse injury*, or *boish*: all that should come to know it, would account him exceeding *fetish* that should doe it.

But beholde, that which were wonderfull *fall* or *injury*, with *vs* to doe, from *man* to *man*; is the *Lords* doing betweene himself and vs, and may most worthily be accounted an *admirable* favour, and mercy, in his majesty, towards vs *miserable transgressors*; who (above all things) are bound to magnify his most glorious name in *this* thing which is (and ought to be, according as it doth well deserve to be) *marvelous* in our eyes, and to be sought out, considered of, and sought after, of all that love the Lord, *especially*, of all *boise*, whome he hath loved in this kinde.

For of *this* manner of merchandising, and of *such* a kinde of commerce as this is, it may well be sayd (as the *Jewes* spake of that *mighy miracle* of opening the mans eyes who was borne blinde) [*Since the world began, it was never heard*] that any man hath done such a thing;

a thing, to give away good for euill, yea, the best, for
for the worst.

It is the Lord alone, who bring's

all things out of *nothing*, in creation.

all good things out of *euill*, in regeneration.

all light out of *darknes*.

all mercy out of *misery*; yea

all grace and piety, out of *sin and impurity*.

it is his *goodnes*, and his *glory* thus to doe, and all
that are *good*, cannot but *glorify* him for thus
doing.

When the Lord Iesus had reproofed, yea, and vp-
brayded the *Laodiceans* for all the *euills* that were in
them, as their *pride*, *presumption*, *selfe-conceitednes*, and
lukewarmnes in religion, he perswades them to part
with these things, and to worke them to a greater
willingnes and forwardnes therevnto, he tell's them
what they may haue of him, in *leis* of them; to wit,
many and fundry excellent things; *eye-salve* to an-
noynt their eyes: *golde* tryed and refyned by the fyre,
&c: even all things that might make them *truly*, and
thoroughly happy

And vpon the same ground, did our saviour advise
the *young man* that came loe forwardly to him, to en-
quire the *next* and *needest* way to heaven; why (saith
Christ) *sell all*, & *give to the poore*, (and because
thou shalt not thinke it a *loosing* bargaine, know,
that instead of that thou puttest away here) *thou*
shalt haue treasure in heauen: loe here is *treasure*
for *trash*, yea, *heavenly treasure* for *earthly trash*.

Who but God would, (yea or could) give *this*,
and make such blessed *barriers* with vs: as to let vs haue
and enjoy, *golde* for *drasse*, yea the *finest* gold, for the

foullest drosse; precious rubies; for base rubbish; things excellent and invaluable, for those that are vile and detestable? It is he that doth it, it is we that receive it, we leave what is loathsome, and have what is lovely; he whose mercy is above the heavens hath done this vnto vs, and holy is his name; who for his owne names sake doth endue vs with holynes, yea, [he make's vs partakers of his owne holynes] soe soone as we surcease our belishnes, if we let goe our dung, he let's vs enjoy and possesse, those blessed and dearest advantages, which Christ Iesus hath bought with his blood.

Who can prayse the Lord enough for this, or sufficiently advance his name, who hath wrought this for the happines of our hearts? who having nothing worse (then that which is best) to give, for the worst we have, doth not therefore refuse to trade, and intermeddle with vs, and soe send vs away empty, without any thing; but is graciously pleased to entertaine commerce with vs, and to bestow vpon vs his blessed graces, for our cursed impieties, his sons robes; for our owne rags, the righteousness of Christ for this wretchednes of ours.

Oh deare, and welbeloved Christians, would God that we could spend some houres in the heavenly meditation of this thing, and thinke of this happy merchandise in this one respect added to all the rest. Did we but enter the serious consideration herof, what evill could be beloved of vs? what sin would be deare vnto vs? were it possible that any impiety should have the least place in our affections, if this were well pondered of vs? who would give house-roume to dyt, that might have as much money as his house would holde, if he would but cast the dyt out of dores? were

we persuaded of *this*; and possessed with it, as we should be every evill would be *abhorred* of vs, *abominable* to vs, and well worthy our greatest *execration*, seing soe long as we *keepe it*, it *helps out* those singuler, and surpassing excellencies *afore sayd*; and alsoone as it is *voyded*, we are presently filled with them.

Could any merchant, be excusable among men, that should refuse such a *beneficiall barter* as this, as to have some rare commodity, for some *ordinary* drug: he who should doe it, would be thought a *foole* and a *dole*, if he dealt for *himself*, and no lesse, but (it may be a *knave*, which is more) if he were entrusted to trade for some *other*: would any mā thinke him *fit*, or *worthy*, for any merchants busines, that should neglect, and let goe such a *market*, wherein soe much benefit might be made, by bartaring away a *meane* commodity, against a *good*?

And are we not then condemned of our selves, (beloved) even out of our owne *mouthes*, nay *consciencies*, if in this heavenly trading we let slip such singuler advantage? and is not our condemnation soe much the more *just*, by how much, these kinde of most commodious *barter*s are *ordinary* and *common* betweene God and vs, whereas among men, they are rare, and *un-usuall*, and not every day to be founde.

Common did I say? nay, they are *continuell*, in this traffique, for there is *no other*, neither (indeede) can be, for *how* should there? whenas it is vnderstandable, and past all question, in *all* that have to doe with the Lord in this blessed busines, that it is not more certaine, that he hath nothing but *good* to conferre vpon vs, then it is, that we have nothing but *evill* to

put away in steed of the *good*, wherewith he doth *possesse vs.*

If there be any dealing betweene the Lord of heaven and vs, it *is*, it *must* be, it cannot *but* be, of *good* on his part to vs, for *evil* on our part, toward him: inas-much as nothing *els* is to be had of *neither*.

They who have brought the *worst*, have carried away the *best*, as might be most manifest in those fore-named examples of *Manasse*, of *Mary Magdalen*, of *Paul*, and such others: which I speake not to *encourage* any man to be naught, [*A good hart will never make such bad use of any thing*] but to *comfort* those who have beene soe; and *now*, from their soules doe desire to be better, that *Satan* may not keepe them away, and *quash* them with their conceit of being *too vile*, seeing they who have come to the Lord, and with whome it hath pleased his holy majesty to *entertayne* this gracious commerce, if they have brought with them the *grossest vices*, they have borne away; the *greatest graces*.

And this is not only to barter *evil* for *good*, but the *worst evil* for the *best good*. So that the more *wretched* we come, the more *rich* we goe: he who was most *ungodly*, goeth away most *gracious*.

So that if in respect of things that are *evil*, any man shall say as sometimes *Peter* did touching things temporary and *civill*, [*I Ve have left all & followed thee, what shall we have?*] it may be truly answered to them, as by *Christ* it was to him; that if he that foregoeth *lawfull* things, shall receive such abundant reward; much more shall they who doe relinquish things *sinfull*, finde that *unspeakable favour* and *advantage* before spoken; yea and (as it is added there) besides, over and above.

aboue all that can be conferred vpon him, here on earth, to make him truly *gracious*, he shalbe sure, in the life to come to be eternally *glorious*, with that God, who hath not disdayned (out of his speciall grace) to deale with him, vpon the tearmes wherof we now treat.

And *thus* shall it be done to the man whome the Lord will *honour*, even to that man, (who in *thus* doing) will *honour* the Lord, as we have sayd, in relinquishing all his *impiety*, to doe it away for *holynes*. Every such trader, shall finde abundant *benefit* on earth; and infinite *blessednes* in heaven. The *end* of this course is *endles* comfort.

And shall we neede to vrge any other *arguments*, or by more powerfull *evidence* to perswade men, or to plead with them, to forsake and surcease all sin, whenas (*before-hand*) they know they shall *thus* gaine by giving it away. Of this I am sure, an *Elect* sinner, needeth no *more*, though it might be had; and (seing *more* cannot be enforced) he that is not preuayled vpon by *this*, doth thereby proclayme himself no better no other, then a *reprobate*. Gods evidence are preuayling with his *elect*; and he that *rejecteth* them, it is a most sure signe, that God in great justice hath *rejected* him.

Let vs then rest perswaded, yea resolved herin, that in this busines of *celestiall* trading, as we can fare *no better*, soe we shall fare *no worse*, but according to these words. It is not more *experimentally* true to every mans *feeling*, that our great & vniuersall *grand-father* Adam, did vndoe vs all; when he soe wretchedly made away his created & perfect *grace*, & fell into *sin*, & soe became eternally accursed; then it is *vague sionably* true.

true to every mans *faith*, that by this *barter* (of which we speake) we shalbe made men, againe, and that for ever, and ever: his coping with the *Diuell* was not so *ill*, as this of ours, with the *Lord*, is good: beleeve it, this *advantage* doth equall, nay wonderfully exceede that *damage*.

Let no man *fear* it then, but every man (in the *fear* of God) *fall* to it, for we may be (nay we shalbe) *worse offred* if we refuse soe great goodnes as this, then which, it is absolutely impossible, to be *better offred*. He that is *wise* will ponder these things, and (vpon deliberation of them) put himself *immediately* vpon their practise.

A man seing he might have but a temporall advantage of this kinde, (though nothing neere soe good) yet would he in *noe wise* (for it were *noe wisdome* to) foreflew it, it should be the *first match* he would make least some other should prevent him of it, or vndermyne him in it. Why then, by how much *better*, and *happyer* this heavenly dealing is, by soe much let our haste and expedition be the *greater*, to attaine the advantage therof, that (through Christ) we may purchase to our selves this *rich portion*.

It hath beene the manner of all Gods children to make *great haste*, to all *good things*; to *run* and not *lusty*, to *force* themselves, and not *linger*, about them: what they have *once* gone about to doe, they have done *quickly*, and that vpon the considerations, wherof we have spoken before, in the *time* of this tradeing.

Let it be our care to doe in like *manner*, and we shall finde mercy in the same *measure*, that is, *about measure*, even that which is *infinite*, and *boundles* blessednes.

And

And thus, in the *second thing*, of this *second ranke*, to wit, in *Barlora*, you see we are beyond you, and that so farre, that none of yours, come neere any of ours.

We are now to passe on to the *third*, and *last*, of this *ranke*: wherein we shall not be more behinde, but (as in both the former) much beyond you also, and that is in the point which you call EXCHANGE.

In which it is well knowne that you are subject to much *uncertainty*, and (by reason thereof) to some *losse*, by the *rising* of it in one place, and the *falling* of it in another; as also by the *unruines* of some of them vpon whome the money is taken, and who are to discharge the *bills at sight*, or at *time*.

In both those, your *damage* sometimes may prove *double*, as (no doubt) but to some it hath done.

But now, that *exchange* which is in vse in this celestiall trading is ever *certaine*, and assuredly *gainfull*. *Certayne* it is and vndoubted, for there can be no reason why any man should mistrust his *money*, never was any one of his *bills* protested by any vnder heaven for default of *non-payments*; whosoever hath beene to receive any thing, he (or whosoever shalbe) is sure to have it discharged in due time. The Lord is not *behinde-hand* with any man, he is *debtor* to none, nay, so farre is he from that, that he is much *before-hand* with every man, and that may all men truly acknowledge, to the *honour* of his name, and *happines* of their owne harts.

And as it is thus *certaine*, soe also is it as *certainely* *beneficiall*, and comodious; never did any receive a *bill*, but he got by it, and was much benefited in the receipt of the same.

These *two* advantages doe not evermore attend
your

Your exchanges, nay sometimes you have but *one* of the *two*, and sometimes (it may be) *neither* of them. If the *exchange* be beneficiall, the *man* may prove naught, that should pay the bill; if the *man* be sure, yet the *exchange* is *variable*, and may fall out *worse* then we accounted; a little time may turne our *gaine* into *losse*, and bring *benefit* to *damage*, and when we reckoned soe much was *wonne*, it is possible that a *few* *monethes* may turne our *figures*, into *cyphers*, and bring all our *profits* we thought to *gaine* by our commodity, within the *price* we payd for it. These *Bills* have beene bad *Weapons* to beate downe many, some have beene soe *beset* with them, that they have beene forced to *fly*. It is impossible that any man should soe foresee *times*, as to know how to passe his *bills* with undoubted benefit and advantage at all times.

But our traders are most sure, both of *good payment*, and of *good profit* also. Who can call *either* of these *two* into any question, that consider's that (which in all the particulars before-going hath beene soe often remembred, to wit) that in this (as in the *rest*) we deale only, and wholly, with the *Lord our God*, who cannot faile vs in any thing.

If we looke vpon his *owne promise*, or vpon his *saints experience*, how plentifully will both these appeare vnto vs? what child of God hath ever received by *exchange* from the Lord, but he hath had both *sure payment*, and *great profit*?

Have they not evermore received *good* for *evil*, (*graces* for *grosse impieties*) at the *first* exchange they ever made? as we have sayd more then once *already*? and when they have come *again*, have they not brought many *wants*, and gone back with celestiall en-
dowments;

downments; and done away their lesser evils (even their sufferings) for more graces added to those they had before? And when yet againe they have come the third, fourth, tenth, hundredth, thousandth time, as oft as they would, or could, from time, to time, during all their dayes of sanctification; have they not received more grace for lesse, a greater measure for a meane, and gotten those good things now to abound in them, which before had only a being.

What may be the meaning of that of David when he saith [*they goe from strength to strength?*] or of that of Solomon, who tell's vs that [*the righteous shyne more & more as the sun to the perfect day?*] Or of that which John hath, where he avouches that [*of his fulnes we all receive grace for grace?*] Or of that of Paul, where he tell's the Romans, that, [*the righteousness of God is revealed from faith, to faith?*] and the Corinthians, that [*We are translated from glory to glory?*]

What (I say) may all these graduall speeches intend but to tell vs that we have more for lesse, more strength, more knowledge, more faith, more joy, more grace (of all sorts of graces) then we had before, evermore a greater measure for a smaller; and this not for some once, or soe, or but seldome, now and then, but continuall, yea, perpetuall, till we come to appeare before the Lord, at the the great day of his appearance when he shall come to judge the whole world.

A childe of God never come's into the presence of the Lord to employ any grace he hath received, but he receive's more to it: still more, and more, the multiplication is continuall, the augmentation ever abiding, more faith to faith, till we come to receive the end of our faith, which is the salvation of our soules: more grace till we

M

passe

pasſe to the end of *grace*, which is *endles glory* with the Lord our God, who is the *fountain* of *grace*.

Thus like a good *ſtock of money* well managed, our *graces* are ſtill bringing in ſomething vpon vs, and adding to that which we had attained before, he who is ſtill doing with them, and laying them out wiſely, ſhall be ſure dayly to get ſomething by them; if we ſend them out with *vprightines*, they will (without queſtion) come home with *profit*.

Two talents gaine *two other talents* to them; *five talents* gaine *five more*; the church of *Thiſtyra* had her happines in this, that [*her works were more at the laſt, then at the firſt.*] Thus is it moſt true, that [*to him that hath ſhall be given, & he ſhall have abundance,*] as Chriſt faith.

In temporall exchanges, a man may *fiſh all night*, and *forecaſt all day*, too, and *catch nothing*, nay, it may be, when he hath done his *beſt in boath*, he may *loſt* ſomething, becauſe of the *mutability* of times, and diuerſity of tradeing, *ſcarcity*, or *plenty* of money, or commodity, may occaſion the diſappointment of the wiſeſt mans expectation.

But this buſines is never *bad*, much leſſe *worſe*, and *worſe*; nay it is (and wilbe) ever *better* and *better*; ever more *mending* and *prospering*, in all the paſſages of the ſame, yeelding

not only *better* for *worſe*,

but *more* good for that which was *leſſe*.

He that makes over *any thing*, is moſt ſure to receive *more*, it is not poſſible a man ſhould deale with the Lord, and have nothing *added* to his ſpirituall eſtate, at any time. Nay, wheras *exchanges* are vſually beneficiall to you, but at *ſome times*, (and thoſe not the *moſt* neither)

neither, inasmuch as you often meete with many miscarriages, the *exchange* here, is *all-ways* such, as cannot be capable of any *danger*, of *damage*. It lyeth not in the hands of *merchants*, or power of any *man*, to raise it, or pull it downe; it is only in the *Lord*, the most able and liberall *paymaster* that can be, to dispose and order it, according to the good pleasure, and wisdom of his owne *Will*. All tymes are *profitable*, all seasons are *gainfull*, to them that have to doe with *him*, it matters not for the *time* of the *yeare*, one part is not more *quick*, then another, for there is no *dead time* at all, (no not a moment) in dealing, with the *living God*.

Neither can *one time* yeeld too much, or another *too little*, to vary it, but it abideth (*evermore*) most beneficiall to every one that doth *conscientiously*, & *wisely* bestirre himself in it.

So that now we see, these *exchanges* doe in all respects excell your.

And thus in all the *three* particulers of this *second ranke*, this trade is in better case then yours; and soe we have made good *two parts*, of the *three*, (whereof we spake in our *first division*,) soe that it is now without all controversy, that

both we are *free* from all the evils *yours* hath, and also, doe more *abound* in good things then *yours* can doe.

Whatsoever is *incommodious* in *yours*, this hath *noe part* at all with it; whatsoever is *profitable* in yours, this hath *more part* in it then yours can have. Soe that in these *two ranks*, you are *below vs*, and we *above* you.

There now remayneth only the *third*, and *last*, and (*indeede*) the *best* of all the *three*, and therewith we

M a are

are to acquaint you for your more comfortable and *resolved* encouragement, to *besake* your selves to this blessed busines, and not to be wholly *taken up* by that other, which (compared with this) is not *once* worth a meing.

The which, as it hath (*in some parts*) appeared to every man of ordinary vnderstanding, by those things that have beene spoken in the *two* former *rankes*, soe will it most plentifully discover it self (for every one's *plenary satisfaction* in this *last*, and *best* property, (or *prerogative*, rather) which we have of purpose reserved till now.

And that is this, that this our heavenly merchandise is not only *fully voyd* of all evils, and doth *overflow* with all the good that yours hath, at the *best*; soe now, it is in the third place to be noted, that over and about *both* the things about mentioned, it hath some things *peculiar* to it self, and not *common* to your terrenall trading, or *communicable* with it in the least.

And that is in some *singular* (yea, I may well call them *superlative*) excellencies, wherein it infinitely *overgoeth* all earthly employments, and noe commerce among men *can* receive them. So that this *last ranke* is of *such* good things as *this* hath, and *yours* hath not, but remayne and are reserved, as *inseparable* comforts, and benefits thereof, as being *too superlative*, for any *inferiour* occurents of the earth ever to reach vnto.

I may well and truly say they are *superlative*, and every man may most *worthily* account them soe, who shall observe, and consider (as he ought,) *either*, that which our text sayth in *generall ver. 15.* that [*all thou canst desire are nas to be COMPARED to her,*] to
wilt,

wit, to the *things* we now treat off : Or, the *particulars* themselves that doe soe exceede *all degrees* of comparison with terrenall tradeing, as that they are the *sole excellencies* of this celestiaall commerce.

And *this* their *incomparable* excellency, in their most *royall prerogatives* aboute all terrestriall, *trash*, will abundantly appeare, if we bring them both, to the *ballance*, and soe soone as they shalbe layd together, it will be seene how *heavy* these *heavenly* things are, how *light*, and *slight*, those of the world will shew themselves to be.

We have seene already, how *short* they come in those *good* things wherein yet, they have *some share*, and carry some kinde of *consimilitude*, but now they come to be poyzed against those *supernaturall* and most proper *prerogatives*, wherof they have not only *no part* but in *truth* *noe appearance*, we cannot but imagine they wilbe found, as

as *nothing*, yea lesse then *nothing*.

as *vanity*, yea lesse then *vanity*.

not worthy to be (*comparatively*) soe much as named with these better things; the *least* wherof, doth soe surpasse the *best* of these.

And to say as the truth is, what proportion, or necessities can be reasonably conceived betweene the things of *God* and the *World*; of *heaven* add *earth*; of *corruption* and *incorruption*; what is *mortality* to *life*, *finite* to *infinite*, *momentary* to *eternall* inferiour and *fading*, to that which is aboute, and *abideth*, for ever?

Reason cannot paralell these *particulars*, much lesse will *religion* permit it; though our *reason* should (against *all reason*) be soe presumptuous as to attempt

tempt it.

But let vs set our selves to enquire into the things themselves what they are in *particular*, that we may shew that to be true, which we say. To enter vpon all, is none of any *purpose* (neither indeede is it *possible*) to treat of them; but some few we will intreate of, soe farre as may

both *bret de some admiration* in vs.

and bring some *consolation* to vs.

that both our *consciences* may be convinced, of them, and our *affections* enflamed after them, and we may with more extraordinary *seruor* of mynde, and spirit *soundely* follow them, the ever we have *soudely* perused the world.

1. First then, be it vniuersally knowne, and well considered off, that the whole busines of this Merchandise, lyeth all in ONE PLACE, and with ONE PARTY, and in ONE COMMODITY?

What a *happnes* is this? what a *benefit*? what a marvelous *favour* and *advantage*; may it be match't (in all *three* respects?) nay, in any *one* of the *three*, in all the earthly merchandise vnder heaven? Can any *such* place be found, as in which a man may enclose all he hath to doe, not needing to stirre a *broad* else-where all the dayes of his life to doe any thing?

If it could; can any *such* merchandise be founde in that place, as would take vp a mans whole time, all his dayes and endeavours, and yeeld him benefit enough, without intermeddling with any *other*? Or, if that could be also; can yet the *third* thing concurre (vnto both the former) that any *one* *such* party should be found, who were soe *absolutely* able to furnish all, that come

to

to trade in this *place*, with this *commodity*, that they should not have any cause, or reason, to seeke (in the least) to any other *person*, or *persons* whatsoever, for any thing we have to doe therein?

Nay we know the contrary in all earthly occurrents: that all *places*, *partys*, *climates*, and *countries* of the world, which may be *sayled* vnto by *sea*, or *travell'd* vnto by *land*, yea, and that all *kindes* of *commodities* that can be found any *where*, whither the *four* *windes* can carry a man; as also, that all *kindes* of *nations*, *peoples*, *tongues*, and *languages*, as well *Pagan*, as *Christian*, as well *Savage*, as *civill*, are dealt withall touching the trading: that their *territories* doth yeelde: the *places*, the *partyes*, the *commodities* are innumerable, which *merchants* (*among men*) doe hunt after to attayne *temporall* wealth. And what *paine*, *perplexity*, *perill*, *paines*, & *expence* this is, all experienced men doe know.

But now on the other side, in this *celestiall* busines, the benefit is not only soe *abundant* (as we have sayd) but it hath this *one* advantage more (which make's it even *superabundant*) that it is most *easy* to him that is a *trader* to manage the same, without any such *molestation*, and *trouble*, as he must be put into, in the ordering of this *temporall* pelfe.

For why? you may easily apprehend the *facility* hereof, whenas it appeareth that all that deale in it, have nothing to doe with any but

only with *one party*, which is *God*.

only with *one commodity*, that is *Grace*.

only in *one place*, that is *heaven*.

With *whome* have we to doe, but *God*? for *what*, but *Grace*? from *whence*, but *heaven*? It were not only vanity and folly, but foule impiety, to goe *other-where*, but to that

to that place; or to any *other person*; or for any *other benefit*: for *not* place, but heaven, no *person* but God, can afford this *one* merchandise, whereby all are made men that deale with it.

Oh what *ease* is it to a man, to have all his busines in *one place*, and with *one party*, and in *one commodity*: who could desire a more comfortable course of commerce, or a more excellent *manner* of managing of his busines, then *this*?

This merchandise doth not more exceede mens in all the *excellencies* before-spoken off, then it doth in the *easyness* of the same; which, being added to all the incomparable qualities it hath already, doth make it much more *admirable* in excellency then it was before.

The busines of this world, the *Maisterman* of the earth how *tedious*, and *difficult* is it to manage in all respects, what *running*, *ryding*, *sayling*, *poasting* by sea, and land doth it require? how much *time* doth it devoure and swallow vp, to get *hither*, and *thither*? no day, nor scarce the *night*, noe nor *Gods day*, but is too often taken vp in this busines, we *eate* not sometimes, sometimes, we *sleepe* not, we *serve not our selves*, nay (which is the *miserie*, and *mischiefe* of all) we scarce *serve our God*, having soe much to doe, such *multiplicity* of busines, and *diversity* of commodities, & parties, as we deale withall; doth even confound vs, that we are not our *owne men*.

Some one man is *free* of many *fellowships*, and hath trade in *most parts* of the world, & deales in soe many particulers, that he hath agents and factors in *most mart-townes*; and is (like *Martha*) so encumbred with *many things* that he knowe's not which way to turne him;

him : here arive's a ship from the *EAST Indies* ; there's another outward bound for the *WEST* , some are expected from the *North-seas* , others from the *South* ; he hath to doe beyond the straight of *Magellan* , and in those neerer straights of the *Mediterranean* ; the gulf of *Persia* , and of *Venice* , the *Grand-Canaryes* , and *Madagascars* , all have somewhat of *this* ; no winde blowe's ; but he hopes for some good, from our place or other ; here he is *merchant* , there *owner* ; and every where an *ensurer* ; and *thus* , man wraps himself into a *labyrinth* & *maze* of fading merchandise , and become's a kinde of *Whiquitarie* (as it were) in his busines.

But beholde and see , and consider well, here is *one* thing which is *absolutely needefull* , and *infinitely gainfull* ; and you neede none of this trouble to partake of the true treasure of the same ; neither travaile over *any* sea, or over *much* land, to compasse this commerce, and all the comfort of it, it is but to goe

from our *owne* house, to *Gods*.

from our *selves*, to *heaven* in affection.

from our *sin* to *grace* by sanctification.

the kingdome of God, (all true & eternall comfort) is *neere* , if it be not in *thy hart* , and *mouth* , it is thyne owne fault, who hast soe *black's* up both, with the *baser* busines of the world, that these best things cannot enter into thee.

It is no wonder , that the scriptures doe still lye at vs (as they doe) to *beate* vs from *many* things , to *one* ; even from *all other* things whatsoever , to *this one* ; of whose *excellency* we have heard so many things already, and of whose *ease* to compasse it, we cannot doubt with any reason , seing it is but *one* thing that we have to looke after.

At what time the Lord meant to make his people fully happy, in tying himself to them in mercy, and them to himself in duty, that he, and they, might mutually enjoy each other, in that [peace, which passeth all understanding,] and in that [joy, which is unspeakable & glorious,] he tell's them by his Prophet, that they shall have [One Hart, and One way.]

When the Apostle Paul was once resolved to set upon the best way, to most happines, he tell's the Philippians, what he himself did, and what he would have both them, and all Christians to doe. For my owne part (saith he) [this one thing I doe, I forget that which is behinde, & follow hard toward, &c.] And, for your parts, (saith he, againe) I would have [you all mynde one thing,] and, [walke after one rule,] that you may, [With one mynde, & one mouth praise God.]

When David desired that wherby (if he might obtayne it) he accounted himself in most comfortable condition, he saith, [One thing have I desired of the Lord,] not that he desired nothing els, but, because this one thing, comprehended all thing els, which might concur, to his hearts content.

And to speake as the truth is, all unity is excellent, it flowing from the very nature of God who is indivisibly, infinitely, and inconceivably ONE, in himself, that is to say, in his most pure, and perfect essence and being; and as this unity or oneness is a thing most glorious in him; soe (from him) it is a most gracious favour & singular fruit of his loue to vs, that he hath pleased to free vs from that confused multiplicity in spirituall things, wherin men are so miserably enwrapped, entangled; and soyl'd, in the pursuit of those present things they doe, or desire, to enjoy in this earth; they are
drowned

dressed in many suites See faith the Apostle.

But they who have to deal with this *one God*, are that *one communion* of saints; that *one body* of Christ; that *one spouse* of his; into whome whosoever is truly interested, is unspeakably blessed: incorporation into him; (even into this *one Lord*) brings eternall blessednes to all, who are incorporated into him: inasmuch as all such have

but *one God* to serve.

but *one heaven* to seek.

but *one glory* to gaine.

And this consideration as it doth marvelously advance and magnify this *trade* above all *trades* in the earth: soe doth it (in like mannet) most justly *shame*, all such as are soe litle skild & experienced in the same; seeing that by this admirable *unity*, it becomes soe exceeding *vast*.

What hath the Lord made it but *one* in all respects; and reduced all those infinite, and, *innumerable* duties, into so *narrow* a roome and compasse, and made it soe *complete* in excellency and advantage? and shall we be *ignorant* and *unseene* in it, and *no-body* at it? Is this *one* thing, our *only good*, by which we are blessed for ever, and ever, and shall we be such *fools*, and *judges*, as not to vnderstand our owne good *shortly*? Shall either *Satan* soe *seduce* vs; or the *World* soe *bewitch* vs, as that we should neglect this *one God*, from whome we have all good; and soe give him cause, at his great and dreadfull day, to yprayd vs before his owne face; to our *confusion*, that in a world of *variety*, and *multiplicity*, of *base*, *earthy*, *corruptible*, and *temporary*, trash, (whole *worldes* whereof, could never bring vs any *true good*) we were soe wel instructed, and experienced, that we

could both *say* and *doe* much; and that to this our *best*, and *most* blessed busines, wherein the Lord gayne's infinite *glory* by vs, we gayne infinite *comfort* by him;) we should be such *strangers*; as to have no *skill* in it, or acquaintance with it, which might either *enable* our selves, or (by vs) *encourage* others, to bend their *best* endeavours toward the same?

What flesh can stand vnder this *accusation* in the *fearfull presence* of the living God? who can answer it vnto him? surely none; and if we let it alone till *that day*, there is but *one way* for vs, and that is *this*, that those who are (then) *convinced* of it, must be sure to be eternally *condemned* for it.

Let vs then (*deare Christians*) consider seasonably and seriously of it, even while it is *day*, and we may worke; before that *blacknes* of *darknes* come, wherein none can worke; that we may (*while we have time*) honour him, who el's (if we overpasse *our opportunity*) will honour himself in our woe *beyond all time*. Let vs not thinke it a small kindnes that all our comforts are soe *closely* folded together in this *one* particuler.

What may we imagine (thinke yee) was *Dauid* reason to chuse the last of the *three* miserable and heavy punishments, that were propounded vnto him; It was (indeede) a *wonderfull*, and a *wofull* *hwaight* he was put vnto; the *cheyse* was *hard*, betweene *famine*, *sword*, and *pestilence*, (the *three* lashes of Gods whip) with one of those he must *smart*; and seing *all three* cannot be avoyded but *one* must be endured, he resolves vpon the *pestilence*, to vndergoe *that*; that *one* of the *three* he chuses, why soe? note his reason: because in this he should [*fall into the hands of God, not of men*] this was it, in *either* of the *other two*, he was to have to doe with

many,

to wit, with *God*, and *men* too, we may imagine, in case of *famine*, how the people of the land would have flowed about him for *bread*; in the *sword*, the enemy would have *swarmed* about him, & the people for *blood*; he should have had his *hands full*, had he had to doe with *either* of these, but now, in the *Pestilence*, (which he did chose) doe with none but the *Lord alone*, all his busines lay in *one place*, with *one party*, and in *one particular*, he had nothing to doe with any man, but with the Lord of heaven and *none* but he, in this point; and was not this *good husbandry* to cast, and contrive his busines soe neere together?

Is not this written for our *instruction* and *practise*, that we should goe, and learne to doe *likewise*? and if he did it (as she best) in case of such calamity and *distresses*; how much *better* would it become vs, in this particular of our comfort and advantage, to endeavour the same?

Set we our selves (then) towards this employment seing it is soe *couched* to our hands; let vs *shame*, and *blame* our selves, that we are soe weakly seene into it.

It would be most *grosse* in our eye, and that which we would not put vp, or endure, at our *inferiours hands*, that if we should (tendering their *weaknes*, and *inability*.) vse all our vnderstanding to *contract* their busines as *neerely*, and *narrowly*, as were possible, for their *better*, and *easier* dispatch of the same; and soe *summe* it vp, and *abridge* it; that *all* they had doe, were to goe but to *one place*, to speake with *one man*, and about *one thing*; and if herein they should be soe exceeding *carelesse*, as that we should (vpon our enquiry) finde this our *one* and *only* busines so neglected that it is

either,

either, *ill done*, or, *not done*, how righteously might we reprove, yea and punish, such insufferable negligence. By themselves in this case, may all men measure the Lord in the other; how he will deale with those, whose delinquencie were so egregious, that his wisdom and love, should be so monstrously abused, that he entrusting vs but in this one matter, we should be found guilty of so foule neglect before him. *Note* Either this will breede more diligence in vs, or bring more damnation to vs.

And this is the first peculiar and singular benefit, of this last ranke, which this our heavenly merchandise hath, and yours hath not; that whereas yours requires many things to be done, with many persons, in many places, and cannot be brought into closer bounds; this is thus happily abstracted; into one place, with one party, and all that is to be done, is to gayne one commodity.

Now we are to set forward toward a second favour of the same kinde, and it is nothing inferiour, but much about the former, and that is this:

That he with whome we trade, doth GIVE vs ALL we TRADE FOR, yea and ALL we TRADE WITH.

The Stock we trade with; the Merchandise we trade for, yea and the Knowledge, and vnderstanding that any man hath to vse this Stock, to attaine that merchandise, is all freely given vs of the Lord.

He findes vs (as it were) money to trade with, and commodity to trade for; and give's vs vnderstanding to compasse the one with the other, that we may prosper in both.

It is most true, yea, it is too true, that of ourselves we have

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have nothing: the more *shame* is it for vs to *say it*, considering how we were once enriched, with all *fullnes*, and *flowes*, vnto this busines, and are now miserable & naked, having

no *wt*, to *order* our trade,

no *stock*, to *drive* it.

no *advantage*, to *live* by it.

none of all this *growes* in our nature now; we are *bereft* and become *barren* of every of these, and cannot furnish ourselves, with one *myre* of money, or one *farthings* worth of commodity, to *begin* with all.

And as true is it also, that the *Lord*, who is Lord over all, and *rich* vnto all, that he hath endowed vs *once* againe, with all these necessaryes, whereby we may recover our selves in *Iesus Christ*, to be *once more* enriched (and *evermore*, more and more encreased) in our *best* estate: looke what is any way required to make vs *spirituall* merchants, it is cast vpon vs by him, through that inconceivable kindnes wherewith he doth, (in his *son*) affect vs.

Your *temporall* trade doth not partake in this *prerogative*, what man among men, ever furnished *any*, with all these?

For *stock* to begin with all, parents lay vp for their children and it is many times given them; but they must *serve* some yeares, for their *skill*, that is not *freely* conferr'd vpon any; much lesse are *those* many, and severall things that must be *bought* and *solde*; it was never heard, that any merchant had as much *given* him, both of *nature* commodities as he could *export*, or of *forrayne*, as he could *bring in*; he that should have all *by gift*, that other men *pay for*, would be the *wealthiest*, man among the sons of men,

Well

Well our God doth *all* this for vs, the *least* wherof (or not *much more*) is done by man; we are *thoroughly* furnished by him, with every thing, that is, or can be required, to make vs fully happy herein. His *lovs* yeelde's vs all things that belong therevnto in any respect.

What it is we trade *for*, we have heard before, even for *grace*, this we cannot doe, but by *prayer*, and *endeavour* and such other *supernaturall*, and *divine* assistance, as he is pleased to bestow vpon vs, these are the only wayes, to wyinne *spirituall wealth*, & to become *mighy* in the advantage, and abundance, of these celestiaall affaires.

Now who can *begin the world* one whit, (in these things that doe belong to the *world to come*) soe much, as to *affect*, or *attempt* any spirituall gaine, by any of the fore-named meanes; vnlesse it be given him *from above*: the doctrine of any *inherent* powers of grace, in our nature, is no better then a *dream*, *dosage*, and *delusion*: we are tolde enough by *Christ*, who tell's vs that [*without him we can doe nothing*,] no nor *thinke* any thing neither, as the Apostle further avoucheth. If our *being in nature* be of God, and that, [*in him* (alone) *we live & move*,] our *well-being in grace*, and our *best-being in glory*, (with all that appertayneth vnto both) must needs be of *him also*.

If we pause a litle on the particulers, of *Prayer*, and *Endeavour*, it will full well appeare in *both*, that the Lord God, out of the *unsearchable riches* of his grace, doth give vs

both *grace to pray*, and *practise*.
and the *grace*, which is *gained* by both.
and the *glory* which is annexed to *both*.

For

For prayer, (which is a speciall helpe, in this heavenly busines) can we pray of our selves? is it in our power to put *up* ~~one~~ *acceptable* request vnto the Lord? he who saith he can, speaketh a *lie* and the truth is not in him: nay, he maketh God, (even the God of truth) a *liar*, who tell's vs all to our teeth, that [*We know not what to pray as we ought*] but must be enabled by his *spirit* therewith. Note, that he saith not *simply* that we cannot pray, as if we had no possibility of speaking or vttering any desires, or requests before God; for our very faculty and ability of *speech*, may be employed in words of prayer (*read*, or *said by rote*,) as in other words: but *this* he saith, we cannot pray [*as we ought* :] to pray as the mother of *James* and *Iohn*, not knowing what we *aske*; or as they who did aske, but not speed, because they prayed admisse, that we are *too prone* to doe; but to performe the duty of prayer, as God doth *command* it of vs, and will *accept* it at our hands; that soe by it (through Christ) we may obtaine what we pray for; this we cannot doe but are vtterly *impotent* vnto it. God that requires vs to pray to him for that which he will *give vs*, is pleased to give vs (*first*) ability to prayer vnto him. So that, this *first* speciall helpe to our spirituall trading is *freely given vs from him*, with *whome* we trade.

Endowm is the *second*, by it I meane the practicall earriage of our selves, in those duties required to enrich vs in this commerce. Duties must be added to *desires*, performance *on our part*, toward God; to *that*, which we pray he would performe to vs. Now *here* *we* *are*, we are as farre to seeke as we were in the *other*, nay *further*, for it being more, *to doe*, then *to desire*, we who are litle able to the *former* (which is the *lesser*) are lesse

Rom. 8.
16.Mat. 20.
14. 4.

ted to performe the *latter*, which is the *greater*. Our Lord Christ himself tell's vs in plaine tearmes that [*without him we can doe nothing*] and the apostle *Paul* assenteth herevnto; when he affirmeth [*all our sufficiency is of God*] and acknowledgeth that [*by the helpe of Christ he can doe all things*], but without that his assistance, *just nothing*, at all: for it is of him that we have to *will*, and to *doe*, according to his good pleasure, as the same apostle saith other where.

These *two*, are the *principall*, if not the *only* things that we can trade withall, (as we have heard:) they are neither of them *naturall* to vs *now*, as *once*, (when time was) they were, before sin seized vpon vs, and despoyled vs of all those *noble abilities*, wherewith we were *fully* furnished, to the most ready performance of every gracious act: we must have them from him him againe *by petition*, who *once* freely gave them in our *creation*: they doe soe necessarily conduce to our welfare and wealth in this imployment, that we can no more misse them, then he that meane's to be a merchant can be without, *money*, *credit*, or *skill*, in the trade he intendeth to manage.

And yet are not these things more *needsfully* required to be in vs, then they are *voluntarily* given to vs, of our good God, who proclaymeth himself vnto vs (by his *Prophet*) to be that God [*thus teacheth vs to profit, and leadeth vs in the way which he would have us to goe*] and, when he hath done soe, even taught vs (as it were,) how to get an *everlasting living*, he give's vs all the profit we doe, or can get for our selves.

Now consider, and bethinke your selves herof, whether this *kinde* of *kindnes*, have ever beene heard off vnder heaven: hath any *man* done thus to *men* as the

Lord

Lord

THE BEST MERCHANDISE, *All is giuen vs.*

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Lord doth (in this particuler) to all that vndertake this heavenly trading? Or if it were possible to produce some *one* rare, and admirable instance of *unwounded*, and extraordinary *love*, *liberality* and *beneficence*, which (*once*) in many ages might passe betweene *some two*, who were exceeding entyre: yet hath it ever appeared, or doth any record in the whole world, tell vs of any that hath *thus* repayed the state of some wilfull *bankrupt*, and professed *adversary*, who hath not only robd vs in our state, but done his *worst* to defame, and abuse vs, in our *credits*, and good name too, and besides both these, hath further done vs all the *judgments*, and *disgraces*, that he could devise in any respect to heape vpon vs, out of measure?

The Lord our God hath done *no lesse*, but infinitely *more* then this, for vnto him we have beene much more *impious* and *iniurious* (in every regard) then it is possible for *one* mā to be to *another*, and yet he hath throwne these admirable mercyes thus abundantly, vpon vs: whereas our deserts were the *dreadfull* and *dyresfull* fruits of his infinite indignation and justice. Such *love* as this hath no man, (nor can any man have it) the like ynto it, is not *extant* in the earth.

Yet I make no question but some have mett with most loving *masters*, which haue beene as *fathers* to them, &c, done as much as, (it may be *much more* then) their *fathers* could doe for them, God hath pleased to respect, and reward, the *diligence* and *conscience*, of some good servants, with much good from their *governours*. But to be soe surpassing in all kinde of *kindnesses*, as,

first, to teach them their trade *freely*.

then to give them *stock* to trade withall *freely*:

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and

yet

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and to give them all the *benefit*, they *gain* by
both. *Yea*, who among mankind hath done thus? Yet with the Lord, this is *ordinary*, *of all*, *yea* *proportionally* and *universal*, to give us all, we may get *riches*, and all we get, by all he gives us, he doth not *abate* with us, either for *half* the profit, or for a *third* of it, or for *any thing* at all, but doth cast upon our selves the compleat benefit, comfort, and advantage, of all we *gain* by that which he gave us. And this is the second advantage of this *last* *rank*: let us now set forward to a *third*, which doth as much excell the *second*, as the *second* did the *first*, and that is this.

In all temporall trading there may be (and often there is) much *more* *evil* then *good*; but in this spiritual: **NOTHING** is **EVILL**, **ALL** is **GOOD**.

Note this well, and upon due consideration of it, it will manifestly appeare to be as we say, in the point we have in hand, that this is the *best* and most *blest* trading in the world, seeing it is *fully* free from all manner of evil, and absolutely *full* of all manner of good.

The *best* benefit, and *greatest* good, of the worldes Merchandise cannot goe beyond the *body*, the utmost boundes of it extend themselves but to our *worldly* state; there is nothing therein, that reacheth further then the *surface*, in things that are *outward*: and when a man hath filled his purse, and *double* *himself* with *land* and *money*, he hath all that can be enjoyed by it, or expected from it: and admit he have as much of *either*, as his hart can desire; yet the evils that accompany this abundance, doe often equall and sometimes

sometimes exceede all the *benefits* that can come by them: and that

rather in euill of sin

or euill of punishment,

or in both.

For why? if we looke vpon the *body*, or outward man, much busines, great dealings, are not managed, nor the profit of them attayned, with litle molestation, and turmoyle, but a man *bearies* and *bears* himself away and labours in the *very fire* (as the Prophet *Habak. 2.* faith) *for vaine vanity.* And having beene as much trouble, and paine *to get* them, his care is not litle, how to *keep* that he hath got, betweene *both*; he make's himself inferable, in *wilfull* wanting, sometimes of *meate*, sometimes of *sleep*, to *beate*, & *reigne*, that, which when he hath his *fill* therof, cannot helpe him to a *moment* of rest, nor a *marcell* of bread. For all the wealth in the world, if it were in one mans handes, it could neither *fill his belly*, nor *refraich his brayne*, but it leave's him, either to grow *mad* with waking, or *dead* for hunger.

But it resteth not *here*, the *body* hath all the benefit of whatsoever the earth can yeeld, but the *soule* shares with the *body* in the incommmodity, & discomfort therof. (Note this: that the *euill* of it goeth, *there*, where the *good* of it cannot come *neere*) the *soule* (I say) must smart with the *body*, to *catch*, and to *keep* those carnall things: the *head* must be troubled, *mynde* distracted, *sense* perplexed, with *fears*, and *cares* innumerable, and indeede insufferable; every *storme* that blowes, every *knave* that breakes, every *market* that fall's, affrights him, & putt's him into a *bodily* (yea, and into a *ghostly*) *fears* too, least some losse shall befall himself. Even the *inside*, that

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that cannot take part in any of the *advantages*, must yet be annoyed with the *damage* of these things. And soe they draw misery, both vpon soule and body.

But this misery is not *all*, (though the *least* of it be *soo much* for *all this pelfe*): besides *misery*, these things doe pull on *impurity*, (a thing infinitely worse, then all sorrow can be), yea *legions* of evils come on with these earthly advantages; as *corruption* in most men, *injustice*, in some, *prophanation* of the sabbath, in more then a good many, and *injustice* more or lesse in all.

Yea, and when a man has done all *this* *best*, and endured al the *former*, all cannot *escape*, that which is *god*, but it will be gone one way or other, and leaue a man (*every way*) vnhappy,

both in *justice* before God,

and in *poverty* before men.

And throwing a *thousand* deadly darts of distresse, into his hart who once enjoyed, but could not keepe them in his possession.

Now if we ballance the *best good* that all earthly things can bring, against the *least* of these *evils*, we shall haue reason to beleeeve that the *bracket* will nothing neere, defray the *damage*, no man shall ever be a *sewer* that hath to doe therein, for it will not *quite cost*, or pay for *halfe* the charge. And no wise man (I thinke) would haue *wish* to doe in such assayres, wherein the *profit* is but *small*, and momentary, and the *loss* soe *great* and marvellous, as we haue sayd; nay the truth is, it is more then *can* be sayd.

But now if on the other side we will compare the merchandise which we haue in haue with this, in these particulars, it will appeare *unmatchably* to exceede & surpass the same, in *both* kindes of the things before named;

named; having all *excellence*, without any *inconuenience*.

This trade is good for the *body*, and the *soule* too, and it is hard to say for whether of the *two*, it is *better*, inasmuch as it is that which brings *both* into the *best* case wherein they *can* be in this world, or *shalle* in the world to come: the present, and eternall happines of *both*, hangeth hereon.

Nay, if it seeme good to the Lord to afflict vs with any euill, (suppose it be the losse of the *worlds wealth*, or of our *bodyly health*, or other calamity of any kinde we can conceive) the gayne of this trading make's *every euill, good; every bitter thing sweete*; it hath a seasoning and sanctifying vertue, to bring *good* out of *euill*, and more *gaine* out of a litle *losse*, then all *losses* can counteruayle, vnto vs. And not only is *adversity* made easyer, but our *prosperity* (which *without piety* is most pernicious) is made happy to vs also; for it will keepe vs from being *puffed up*, in the height of our earthly happines, and soe *temper* vs betweene the *two extremes* wherupon millions of men are wrackt, that we shall ride *safely*, without any danger on either hand.

For it will not, suffer vs either to *fall* from the highest and steepest top of *abundance*, and *prosperity*, nor yet suffer the deepest gulfes of *want* and *penury*, to sinke and drowne vs. So that this *one good* it hath, that it make's *all* other things *good* to vs.

And in it there is *no euill*, either in *getting*, or in *keepeing* all we can attaine: we may most *lawfully* covet the most of it that can be *gotten*: and as *lawfully* may we care how to keepe all we can get, there is no sin

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orevill in *either* of these. In the *former* there was; and is, (as we spake even now,) and [*Woe to him (saith the Lord) that coveteth an evil covetousnes*] but to covet spirituall things is not only not *forbidden*; but *expressly*; againe, and againe commanded; as he may see that peruseth what the *apostle* saith to the *Corinthians*, both in the *twelfth*; and *fourteenth* chapter of his *first epistle*. In the former wealth, there may be an *excess*, a man may have *too much* of the world; and *for* fast as loone on riches, as on any thing; and therefore to avoyd the perill of this *plurisy*, we are commanded to be content with what we have, and to satisfy our selves with such a measure of outward things as the wisdom of God shall please to put upon vs. be they *more* or *lesse*; but he that can enlarge his desires and endeavours to *crave*, and to *have*, the greatest quantity of this wealth, that is *attainable*; he is the *happiest* man: no man neede *wor*re to feare a *superfluity*; because it is out of all humane *possibility* to have enough, that is to say soe much as we *should have*; of every grace which we once had in *perfection*, when we were *created*, and now (as the *bless*) can have but in *imperfection* since we were *corrupted*: the most sanctified man is he, who hath the most *unsatiable* desire, & most *unweariable* endeavour, after these advantages.

Againe, the *most*, and *best*, that can come by all the confluence and abundance of temporall wealth, is only some *reputation* and *place*, among men; to be a man of *credit* and estimation, whose *word*, or *bid*, will passe currently for great summes upon the *exchange*; to be accounted *square* dealers, and men *for* paymatters, this is the *highest* honour the earths abundance can yelde. And what great good thing is this, when

it

It is apparant to be as common among *Pagans*, as *Christians*, and alwayes as much, yea many times more, their honour, then ours. All the riches vnder heaven cannot make God to give a man *one good word*, or to entertaine a *kind thought* of him, that hath *no*. Is it any mans commendation, in all the bible, that he was rich, and had much? divers good men (who are commended are reported to be *poor*, but noe *poor* nor *single* of their prayse doth, or can consist in this *particular*. And that is most plaine to every mans eye, and observation, who will take knowledge how the Lord speaketh of *those* that had nothing but wealth, to grace them before men; and of *wealth* it selfe considered, as severed from saving grace before God, wealth hath scarce *one good word* in all Gods booke; but I am sure it hath many *bad*: the *odious epithets* that are given it of God, are such as should worke vs to better consideration of the danger of it.

Is it not called *mammon* of *uniquity*? *treasure of wickednes*? *luncheon of riches*?

Doth not Christ compare them to *thornes*? the apostle to *snakes*? are they not sayd to, be *deceitfull*, and *unrighteous*? may not the same man be *wealthy*, and *wofull* too? is it not sayd [*Woe be to you that are rich*?] The Lord Iesus doth not speake of many rich men, but of *those* of whome he doth speake, either *historically*, or *parabolically*, what heavy things are concluded? Of *one* (to wit he in the 18 of *Luke*) in what danger of hell his *soule & body* were, when his barnes were to *litle to inne his corne*: [*Thou soule this night shall they take away thy shale*]. Of another, (to wit the *glutton* in the 15

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of the same *gulf*) that not a few great ones are in the belly of the *gulf* already, and laden with the heaviest damnation? Of a *bird*, (namely the young man, that was *so faine* for heaven) what extreme difficulty of getting to heaven, doth wealth draw upon a man, nay, an absolute impossibility, where riches, and regeneration are severed,

But now, on the other side, the divine commodities of this celestiall commerce, doth get vs a glorious name and state with the Lord, and he is glorified by them in vs: both we are *honoured* by him, and so is he by us through these things. Who are magnified or esteemed by the Lord, but such as in whose *grace* did abound, and who were rich in the endowments of the Holy Ghost as *Abraham* for faith: *Moses* for meeknes; *Job* for patience; *Samuell* for integrity: *Dauid* for faithfulness: and many others for many *graces*: they that were rich in these excellencies are the only renowned persons; the Lord hath left them a name that shall never dye, *same* that cannot rot, all generations to come shall call them *blessed*, and well they may, because now they are in infinite *bliss* done with the Lord. This our merchandise is *that only thing*, which maketh a man both

truly blessed on earth, and fully blessed in heaven.

The Lord doth esteem soe *preciously* of these things and of those that have them, that the best *wares* that can be given are not *soo good*: the things are called Gods *owne*, [My *grace* is sufficient for thee &c.] [that we might be partakers of his holynes:] yea [of the *divine* or Godly nature] (not in the incommunicable *essence*, but in the communicable *effects* thereof). And they that

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that are endued with these things, are entruled as most *natural, necessary, and dear* to him; they are not only his *friends*, (as *Abraham* was both by the *Prophet*, and by the *Apostle* sayd to be) but more, his *children*; yea more then that, his *spouse*; yea and more then that too, (and that which is *most of all*,) his very *members*: and to be the *least* of these, is no meane honor; but to be all *those* (as every one is, that is *any* of these) is glory, and happiness *unspeakable*.

And this our honour and renowne, accrewing to vs, is *peculiar* to vs also, and not (as the former) *common* to the *foes* of the world, whether *carrell christians*, or *cur sed Pagans*; all that are *without* (as the holy Ghost vses the phrase) are without *this* honour, to be *any thing* in Gods esteeme: whether they be such as are *without* the *christian world*; and have not soe much as the *name* of a christian; or such as are *without* *Christ*, being within it; & have no more but a *Christian name*.

Neither of the *two*, can communicate with vs in the comforts of these things; our wealth cannot make them *rich*, they cannot be *partners*, or partakers in it at all, it is all *our owne*, both *wholy*, and *solely*. *Money* they may have, *silver* and *gold* growes as well in their *mynds*, as ours; and for other rare riches their *elymates* excell ours, we fetch much from them.

But *piety, sincerity, sanctity, heavenly wisdom*, saving *grace*, the true *treasures*, they cannot have one *draught*, or *graine* thereof. And the want of this makes them as *vnhappy*, as the *abundance* of the other: the *having* of these makes heaven as *easy* to all *saints*, as the other made it either *hard*, or *impossible* to any other.

Few, not *many* (saith the apostle) *riches*, or *rich*, are *called*; (meaning of the *treasures*) but of *those*, not any

but many, not only *many*, but *all* & but *every* wise, holy, righteous, & religious man is called *sanctified*, & shall be also *glorified*. The former (to wit all *graces*) they have in present possession, the *latter* (to wit *glory*) they have, in most vndoubted assured and vntquestionable, *reuer-*
sion.

Now he that compareth these things in *this* paticuler, will he not say, that it is better trading where is soe much good without any *evil*; then whete is soe *little* good, with much *evil*? is it not best fishing where nothing but wholesome *fish* comes to the net, then where a man may meeete with many *harmefull* things that will teate and spoyle all?

Well, to conclude; though it cannot be denyed but that *some* good (such as it is) is in the worlds wealth, yet this may be avouched, that *few* have sped well that have had it, because the *evil* is more then the *good*, that comes by it. But the benefit of this trade hath redounded to all their happines, who have had the same: not a man ever *sped ill*, that had any part of it because there is much good in the *least* of it, and not *evil* (no not the *least*) in *all* of it.

And this is the *third* thing of this *last* *rank*: The *fourth* now followes, which as it is the *last*, of all in order, soe also is it the *best* of all in nature: yea soe good and soe *great* it is, that it will make men *wonder* exceedingly at it: soe soone as they heare it, because though (in it self) it be as *manifest*, as any of the former, yet it will seeme marvelous to *see* at *first* *sight*, yea almost *in-*
credible, as being not only *diuerse* from all the rest before named, but quite *strange* to the course of all temporal trading. And it is this.

That whereas in all manner of commerce among
men,

men, a man *gets* no longer then he live's and trades: this trade makes a man **MOST HAPPY**, when he hath **DONE TRADING**.

How many benefitts come vnto vs by it, while we follow it, hath beene formerly declared at large, in al the particular's that we have (*hitherto*) prosecuted; but the *last*, and *best*, (even the *infinite*, and *everlasting* benefit, that come's by it) is found, and felt of vs, when we have *left it*, that is, when our time is come that we cannot *live longer*; in this present evill worlde to deale in it.

The worlds merchandise doth not enrich *every one* that trades, during all the time he doth follow it, many doe their *best* and attaine not *much*, but *they* whome it doth enrich, must get all they have while they are *intrading*, if any man during life *give it over*, or, if it *give over* any man by death, there is *no more* profit to be expected, it can yeeld no benefit when it is not followed.

But the *best* of this our trade is brought to a man when he hath done tradeing: our best-being *begins* then, when we make an *end* of dealing: for why? after we have done all we can, we shall receive endles glory, blisse, and felicity, with the Lord our God in the highest heavens.

A man that hath beene a merchant among men, and now is none, he cannot but grow *worse*, and *worse*, because if he *get* nothing, he cannot avoyd it but he must *spend* of the stock, & soe bring himself to a meaner estate, then he was before: and if he *dye* a *merchant*, all is done that wherein he gaynes noe more, the world (in regard of himself) doth also *dye* with him.

But

But this trade, as it is happy to vs (*in some measure*) while we vse it, soe shall it be most happy to vs (*beyond measure*), when once the time is come that we can vse it no more. It doth every way (as we have heard) infinitely *out strip* the *Worlds* assayres; while we are in the *World* in dealing with it: but after we have done with it in the *World*, it doth infinitely *out strip* it self, in those inconceivable comforts and advantages whereunto it carries vs in the *World to come*.

All the time we were interess'd into it here on earth, was but (as it were) the time of our apprenticeship yet it was a *sweet service*, both in regard of our good *master*, we served to wit, *God* himself, and that good *warke* he set vs about, even *godliness* it selfe: but now after the end of all our *dayes*, and *endeavours*, we come (as it were) to be made *free*, and to be set at liberty in perfect freedome peace, and felicity, when we change mortality for life; corruption for incorruption; grace for glory; and that litle good which we have *done here*, for the infinite we shall *have there*.

In the world many a man (who hath done his *best* endeavour) dyes without riches: many others dye at once

both *rich*,
and *wretched*.

and have nothing to *clay*, and *clay* their consciences more, then the pelfe which they have got, which (like some heavy weight) hath lyen soe vpon them, that they could not moue to heaven vnlesse in *Saluans* hopeles & vnseasonable desire, to *dye well*; when they have lived long & *done ill*. Death it self hath not bene more miserably *bitter* to them, then the things they got in their *life*.

But

But where the benefit of all things els doth leave vs, there doth the advantage of this come vnto vs; much of it abideth with vs from the time we began to be traders with the Lord, but the *most*, & *best*, goeth with vs out of *this world*, (or rather) stayeth for vs in that *other world*, till we come to possess and enjoy it there. The things we have spoken of, are *incomparably* beyond those other in temporall trading, but these we speake of *now*, are *incomparable* in respect of the future comforts for which, we shall exchange those that are present with vs.

I remember; it is sayd that the merchants of the great WHORE, (that is, those who traded with her for her whoorish trash,) were the *Kings*, and *great men* of the earth; and it is spoken by the Lord, to the great and just reproach of themselves, that being *foe pains*, they would prostitute themselves so basely vnto her, as also for the furtherance of her most righteous overthrow, and finall confusion, that she *would* and *would* besott, such potentates, with the poysoned cup of her fornications.

But of these merchants of God, it shalbe sayd, (yea it is already sayd, & *irrevocably recorded too*;) that they shalbe kings in heaven, every merchant of wisdom shallbe called GREAT in the kingdome of heaven, and have glory there with the *king of kings*, for ever and ever. The Lord Iesus hath made it *sure* already, by his blood; it is not more ceartayne that he is *dead* *shamefully* for vs, then that we shall *live gloriously* with his father through him; for by his *infamy*, our *honour* was purchased, he dyed *miserably*, to the end we might live *blessedly*, and was content to come *much beneath* himself, that we might be *marvellously* exalted, by his
extreame

extremest abatement. It is he that hath (of his owne goodnes) made vs, of naturall men, *gratius* merchants: and he it is that will make vs, *Princes of glory* after we have beene *merchants in grace*; proclaiming vs, both to our selves, and others (by the proper and peculiar prerogatives of his spirit) to be *heires apparent* vnto that kingdome, while we are in this body here below; and afterward putting vs into the actual, and eternall possession of the same.

And what a *rare*, *royall*, and surpassing prerogative this is, every man may apprehend: it is

rare for the world cannot *match* it;
royall, for it dignifies a man *above* the worlde;
surpassing, for none (els) can *come neere* it.

We were (as was sayd) happy, while we were getting this merchandise by *Prayer*, and *Endeavour*, and such other good meanes as we have specified, but all this was but the *first fruits*, the *beginning* and *earnest penury* of our comforts now to come, which are full, infinite, everlasting, and incomprehensible, for *greatnes*, for *goodnes*, for *durablenes*, and whatsoever els, may any way conduce, to make a thing inconceivably comfortable both *in it self*, and *vnto vs*.

While we were *here*, we were but *driving* this trade, and during the time wherein we were
 either *selling* our corruption;
 or, *buying* sanctification;

we *now*, and *then*, mett with some adverse and opposite things, our graces could not evermore worke *kindely*, because they were many times encumbred, and interrupted; *Satan*, the *world*, and our owne *corruption*, were *often* in our way, all, or *some* of these, did ever annoy vs, doing daily their *worst* to make the streame *hindred*.

dy, to *embrace* these excellencies; and to *embrace* our *swete* proceedings in these happy passages.

But now we shalbe out of the *diuells*, the world, and our owne *sins* reach; all their *gushes* shall not come neere vs, but we shall for ever enjoy most *quietty*, the fruit of that which we have gotten *Christianly*: Now shall we be *enriched*, and *honoured* by him, by whome we were *employed*; and set on worke: now shall we sit with our fellow *Merchants* in *grace*, and posessors of *glory*; *Abraham* *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; all the rest, of the most blessed *Patriarchs*, *Prophets*, *Apostles*, and what soever other *Saints*, doe concure to make vp that *numberlesse* number, of those who are sayd to be, an [*innumerable multitude of iust and perfect men*]; and with them *all*, and *all* the residue of the mysticall members of the most sacred body of Christ, shall we see the *face*, and enjoy the *presence*, of our *liuing* God, our *loving* father, the *king* of *kings* and *Lord* of *lords*, and we shall beholde him as he is,

in the *perfection* of his *essence*.

in the *glory* of all his excellencies.

in the *mystery* of his *persons*.

Then, and *there*, shall we be in such a state, as we cannot now discover; [*it appeareth not what we shalbe*,] saith *John*, that is, in particuler perfection of that estate, of the boundles and vnlimited extent wherof, nature, and mortality, is no way capable.

There shall we be as *kings* to raigne with the Lord, the *king* of *saints*, sitting vpon *thrones* of *glory*, wearing *crownes* of *immortality*, with *Iesus*, the purchaser of these perfections, for vs, who hath given and granted to all *saints* [*to sit vpon his throne, as he sitteth vpon his fathers throne*].

Q

What

What we have gott here, shalbe wholly taken vp there, (I meane of those *remayning graces* that shall abide, for *faith, hope, patience, zeale*, and such like graces, as had their proper exercise, and *principall* imployment, either vpon present *evil*, or good to come, and not yet possessed, shall cease) but all those graces that goe into glory with vs, shalbe imployed in a most *glorious* manner, vpon the most *glorious* things that are there, as our *Wisdom*, and *knowledg*, and *loue*, vpon himself, his son, and *spirit*, those *three* blessed and distinct persons, every of which is *God* to be blessed for ever, not *thrice*, nor a *thousand thousand* times, blessed, but infinitely beyond all *millions* of blessings and *blessednes*, that the created and finite hart of man comprehend in the *ost* most *imaginations* therof.

That *one* moe glorious *essence*, of those *three* most glorious persons, and that *Trinall*, and most sacred *subsistence*, shall then be the only objects, of our.

Wisdom, to know them *fully*.

loue, to affect them *perfectly*.

joy, to delight in them *everlastingly*.

These while we were here among *myths* of ignorance, were *mysteries* vnto vs, and such *secrets* vnto our clouded vnderstandings as we could not clearly discern, but we had some *glimmering* light, or weake *gasse*, at them; such as the man had, whose eyes were in part opened, [*that saw men walking like trees*] which was a *seine* very grosse, and confused [*Now we see* (saith the apostle) *through a glasse darkely, and know but in part*] But when we shalbe translated from hence, to that celestiall *State*, and *Station*, [*then, shall we see face to face*, and *know vs we are knowne*] yea (saith another apostle) [*we shall see him*, (the Lord) *as he is*] both in the incomprehensible

hensible *unity* of his nature, and inconceivable *trinity* of the persons: the severall *excellencies* of the former, and their infinite *acts*: the distinct *acts* of the latter, and their divine *effects*; the FATHERS eternal generation of the SON; the SONS eternal sonship, or filiation, of the father; and the proceeding of the holy GHOST eternally from the Father; and the Son, shall the shyne openly vnto vs: and soe shall the power, the wisdom, the mercy, the justice, & all that infinite variety of ineffable goodnes, whic hath his residence in the glorious nature of that Being of Beings; these shall we see with open face; yea (as we sayd even now) *face to face*, the Lord will no more turne his backe-parts to vs, but we shall have full sight of all his glory, (vnto the brightnes wherof, the clearest lustre of the sun, is but as fogge, and darknes) our eyes, and vnderstanding shalbe free from feeble *impotency*; and both made absolute, in perfect & immutable *immortality*, to beholde him, who hath blessed vs with these heavenly things in heaven.

The *sheddones* of these things which we now reade with a *flourishment*, in the booke of God we shall then and there, receive and feele, with vntterable *ravishment*, where the Lord is, and where we shall for ever be with him, in the highest happines that the heaven of heavens, hath reserved for all the holy and elect.

Our Lord Christ had a *transfiguration* on earth (vpō mount *Tabor*) wherin his glory was such (compared to his ordinary estate, which was very meane amongmē) as that *Peter*, vpon sight of the same, so affected with it, that he could not contayne the manifestation of his apprehension, but must reveale his *over-joyed mynde*, in desiring to make his abode and dwelling there: yet

Peter was no partaker at all in it, but a meere *spectator* of it, he was graced & chosen, to be one of those that might stand by to beholde it, as a witnes, but neither he, (nor any of the rest who had the favour to be admitted thither) were more then *standers by*. Now if the sight of such *momentary* glory as may be seene vpon a *mountayne* here on earth, and wherein one hath hath no part himself, but only *beholdeth* it in another, who doth wholly enjoy the same, may soe take vp a man beyond himself to make him soe quickly *forget*, and soe willingly *forget*, all other things? what shall we conceive that heavenly glory and happines will be vnto vs, and how shall we apprehend it, whenas it is *greater* then can be manifested on the earth, and *more glorious* vpon our whole soule and body, then it was (*there*) vpon Christs *humanity*; we our selves, not only beholding his glory (which infinitely surpasseth that which was seene here) but the glory of the *Father*, and of the *holy Ghost* also, and made glorious partakers of the same glory (not which *Christ* had here in the world, but of a farre better, even of that which, *he* (as himself saith) had with his father before the world was. Our corruption that darken's vs now, will not only not suffer vs to see, but doth disable vs vtterly to discern the *least* thought of that honour and happines, which (indeede) is more then *can be thought*.

So that we who are true *Christians*, shall have a more glorious *tranfiguration* in heaven, then *Christ* himself had on earth, to be raysed from merchandising in *grace*, to be ioynted into matchles glory, with the Lord & king of glory. Such honour have all his saints: *euery* al who doe their best endeavours to honour him *seru*ely, in their bodyes and soules, harts and liues. This
endles

endles joy, and, the full fruition of all those pleasures, which are in fullnes at his right hand for evermore, shalbe the *end* of our faith, & such other graces as wee have gotten, Here shall we see not *Hennoch*, & *Elias* talking with *Iesus*, but *Iesus* himself talking with vs, that is manifesting such gracious familiarity to vs, as a *father* would doe to his *dearest childe*: or a *bridegroom* to his *delightfull and beloved bride*: there shall we heare those most *melodious* voyces, which *mortall tongues* cannot speake, nor *mortall eares* heare, vnlesse they be (as it were) *immortalized* for a season, (as were the apostle *Paul*) who heard things not to be vttered here on the earth, when he was wrapt vp into the *third heauen*; and had some taste and appearance of that glory, which he doth now possesse in infinite fullnes.

And this is the *last*, and *best* thing of this *third* and *last* ranke, wherein we see, that this heavenly trade brings vs that *blessednes*, which cannot be brought vnto vs, by the most *gainefull* busines of the whole world.

Thus we have now (at length) made good that which we promised in the beginning; to wit, the mayne point we propounded; that **GODS MERCHANDISE** is better then **MANS**: which I hope hath abundantly appeared in every of those particulars, which we have at large discovered to prove the same Soe, that now we stande perswaded & convinced thereof, as of a divine and vndeniable truth.

The mayne evidence, (as you may remember) did consist of *three* most noble *branches*, every *branch* spreading it self into diuers admirable advantages, which it cannot be amisse for vs *briefely*, and in few words to *reca*l to our memory.

We

We have heard that the excellency of this trade about yours doth consist as in many, for especially in *three things*.

First, that it hath *NONE* of the *EVILS* which are usuall in your affayres, and therein we have shewed, that there is.

No Adventure.

No Bad Debts.

No Bad Wares.

No Bad Seryants.

Secondly, that it hath all the *GOOD THINGS* that yours hath, with the advantage of a *better measure* of them, then can be had in yours: and here we have shewed, that there are evermore.

Good Sales,

Excellent Exchanges, and

The Best Barter.

Thirdly, that it hath some *GOOD THINGS* *PROPER* to it self, which are beyond all possibility for your trade to partake in: and here we have shewed, that,

All our busines is *in one place* *with one party.*

About one commodity,

All we trade *with*, and all we trade *for*, is freely *given vs.*

All is absolutely *good*, without any *evil*.

The *best* benefit of this trade come's when we *have one trading.*

Every of these passages, one by one. (in their due order) have beene playnely discovered and handled in our hearing, to the end we might well & thoroughly know

know the odds betweene a *heavenly*, and an *earthly* commerce, betweene a *civill*, and a *celestiall* course of traffike.

And now my *Christian, beloved*, and *deare* bretheren after whose eternall enriching, my soule dash long, from the very hart roote in Christ Iesus) seeing for it is, as we have seene, that there is A **TRADE** for surpassing this of yours. A trade that hath.

Noe evil in it, whereas yours hath much.

All good in it, that yours hath and more.

Yea, some Good things that yours cannot have.

What say your soules now to these things which we have said? bethinke your selves thoroughly, and call in all your *juniors* thoughts to the most serious & hartty consideration of what you have now heard, that you may make such an answer, as suits with *Christianity*, and may.

both have approbation with God.

and bring consolation to you.

I say, what say you, *soules, consciences, myndes, wills, affections, & hartes*, here vnto? summon them all, joyntly, and severally to give answer, to that God, who will either presently appose you (*in mercy*) to make you for more then ever you have done: or let you alone till *hereafter* (at his day of appearance) *in justice*, to condemne you for ever and ever, for that which you should have done.

If there be a *better trade* then that which you are busied in? if a *more*, and *much more*, yea and a *far more*, beneficiall busines may be founde, will you not be *affected* toward it, and *fall* to it? were there but some odds of advantage betweene our present temporall employment we follow, and some other, that a friend had

had given vs notice off, it would be censured for egre-
gious *follyes*, yea for grosse *folly*; in vs; if we did not
forthwith betake our selves vnto it, and lay by; that
we have, to get better,

And shall others condemne vs in *this latter*, and not
we, condemne our selves in *that former case*; wherein we
may be more happy, then any exchange of earthly bu-
sines vnder heaven can make vs; when we shall not
need *wholy* to cast aside our civill callings; but *abate*
something of our too *quick*, & *eager adze* after them, &
take this employment vp into the *best* and *soveraigne*
place, setting all other in the *second* and *subordinate* ren-
der it. We neede not *lesse* sell our civill merchandise,
to fall *into this* spirituall; it is enough to keepe it downe
that it be not *predominant* in vs: about the *celestiall*,
or *equall* to it, in our *estimation*, *affections*, and *affairs*; all
earthly things must be *much inferior* to heavenly; if
they have their *owne places*; yet may they sit with the-
se *best things*, though not neere the *best place*, the mer-
chandise of *wisdomes*, & *wealth* are not two contraries
expelling one another; they are not *intemperate* with
one another, but may dwell together, soe that the
world will be content to abide, and keepe her house,
and residence, in the *lower room*, and not offer to clym-
be into the *upper palace* of these spirituall treasures;
which being *heavenly in nature*, have most reason, to be
highest in their *habitation*, and the other have as much
reason to sit downe *lower*, as being (at their very best)
but from *below*.

You then who have *insight* and vnderstanding in
the carriage of mens merchandise, and doe well know
the *mystery* of this *temporall* trading; strive to looke a
litle further into this *spirituall*, which doth full well
deserve

deserve to be looked after; the mystery whereof, as I have in some measure desired to manifest vnto you, soe shall the Lord (if once you vnfeignedly take it in hand) reueale it more *completely* then I can doe, and acquaint your hearts, with *many other* excellent advantages & benefitts, then those which I have endeauoured to declare. And hereof you may be sure, for *Christ Iesus* hath given his worde that *[if any man will doe the will of God, he shall know it more entirely then others]* the more *sincere* practise, the more *sound* knowledg. The Lord thinks knowledg well bestowed, on such as bring it to obedience, and expresse it therein; for thereby doth arise *double advantage*, for

both he gayne's,

and we gayne also.

By glory in our practise; by good by our knowledg: it is *honorable* to him, and to vs it is *happy*.

Begin then (*brethren*) to gather your thoughts together, and to call *yours* wits about you: that you may be *truly* wise in this one thing, let your *will* calling be a provocation to this *spirituall*: endeavour to see *that* (as it were) through *this*; make all the good of that, as the *glasse* of *this*, which is so much *better*, that the best of the earthly is scarce good enough, to be a shadow, or representation, of the heavenly.

It was the course of our Lord Iesus Christ, to carry the eyes and cares of his hearers, from *naturall*, to diuine things, he evermore made *spirituall* use of all *civill* occurrences: and as this was Christ's manner of *teaching*, soe will it also be their order of *learning*, who have well learned Christ: and more especially doth it appertayne vnto *you* considering that you are pointed out in *particular*, and the kingdom of heauen is compared

R

(among

(among many other things) to your commerce, and merchandise: soe that if you should not see this better, through your *own* means estate, your blindness were the more justly blameable.

Strive then, and endeavour earnestly hereunto, that you may (as wise *Christians*) answer the worthy expectation *Je sui Christ* hath of you, that you may not be *civill* merchants alone, (for *Pagans* can be soe) but more *spiritually* *spiritual* ones, which neither any *Pagan* (no, nor *counterfeit Christian*) can by any means attayne to be.

And thinke this trade worthy the following, not only for the *fore* said benefitts, but for some other sweete *considerations* ensuing, which I will in few words set downe, the more to *enamour*, and affect your hearts with the same, that nothing may be omitted whereby you may be provoked, and put on, with all alacrity & expedition, to entertaine traffike with the living God, in this enduring treasure.

In the *first* place then, (to *teach* you to attayne this wealth) we must remember; it is every one's *Duty* to be as *rich* as he can in this commerce, and the *richer* he is, the *better* is it for himself, and for others also. [Note what I say; it is every mans *duty* to be as *rich* as he can, and the more rich any man is the more doth

God *glorify* by him: I *trust* to shew this way al

He *glorifies* from God: I *trust* to shew this way al

of *his* from him: I *trust* to shew this way al

In the world this is not soe, no man is bound by any law of God to be rich, (though many breake the most of Gods *lawes* to make themselves *rich*) every one is to rest satisfied with that *measure* of estate, that the will of God see's meete to call upon him, whether it be

be mighty; in *meane*, or *whatsoever*: and but to desire to be greater then the Lord would have vs, is *covetousnes*, which is a sin heavily *punished* of God, as the *root* of all evill, & the *spring* of all them, vpon whome the *branches* thereof doe spread themselves.

But in this busines, *covetousnes* is a *vertue*, a thing commaunded to vs, required of vs, (as we have heard before) if a man can enlarge his hart like *hell*, after the riches of *heaven*, and in regard of *grace*, have an appetite as greedy as the *grave*, (which still crye's *GIVE, GIVE*) the more he would have, and doth want, the happier man is he.

God would have all men rich that meddle in this busines, yea rich in all the particulers of it.

rich in knowledge.

rich in faith,

rich in obedience

Abounding in all things, which may make them *rich in God*. To this end how many *precepts* doth God give that men should be soe? how many *promises* doth he make, to hartens those that would be soe? how many *prayers* doth the Apostle *Paul*, (in all his *epistles*) put vp, that those, *Christians* to whome he wrought, might be soe? there is nothing left (on Gods part) wanting, to perswade men to purchase, and store vp these truest treasures. *Not* happy is he that hath *now*, for his abundance shall *glorify* God, further his owne *glory* with God; and helpe to enrich others with himself. The better any *Christian* thrive's, the better is it for other *Christians*, in the same communion of *faith*, because grace is a thing that cannot be *regarded*, or made a *hoarding*, but it is, & will be common, and comfortable to others, with our selves, in the fruit of the same.

whereof, the *more* any receiveth from vs, the *more* doe we our selves gaine fro' God, who multiply's it *more* in their hartes who are found faithfull distributors of the same. No man can here *undervalue* another; there is no possibility of *foretelling* any man, but very much, of *furthering* all men with the fruite of that which we our selves have received from the Lord. And which is yet *more* (and much to be noted) the very *poorest* of all those, who are in any measure endued with saving grace, are reputed *rich*, and that both *because*, it is the nature of these things to *enrich* those that have them: & *because* also, it is the nature of God (in the *riches* of his infinite grace) to repute them rich (in his son Christ) who have received of his spirit, and by faith, lay holde on those *riches* of his son, who therefore became *poore*, to make vs *rich* before his Father.

All the graces of Gods spirit are farre beyond all *pearles*, and the most *precious* things that can be had are but *vile* in respect of them, even as *dung*, or *trash*, as we have heard. Now all men know, that a little *portion* of that which is of great *price*, and *valuation*, will make a man rich; and he may well be esteemed worth much, though he have no great *quantity* of that which is soe *highly esteemed*, especially if soe it were, that who soever had any *one* of those *priceles* *pearles*, should be interested into that mans *whole estate*, which had all the rest that were to be had: soe is every Christian into Christ, we having any *measure* given vs of God, are made partakers of his *fullnes*, in whome all the graces are *beyond measure*. So that (as was sayd) the nature of these things is *rich*, inasmuch as the come from the Lord: and the Lord, from whome they come, doth (through

his grace) account them *rich*, who have received them according to his *most wise* dispensation.

It is not the *quantity*, or *measure*, but the *nature*, & *quality*, of *Grace*, by which our estate spirituall, is *measured* of the Lord, our God.

Now then, summe vp these passages together, so
wit;

FIRST, that it is most lawfull for all men to be as
rich as they can:

SECONDLY, that the *richer* any man is, the *happier*
he is, both before God, and in *himself*, and vnto
others and,

THIRDLY that every man that is (*indeede*) en-
dued with any saving grace, is reputed
rich:

and then tell me whether these be not *entisling*
considerations, to *take* on any man, to take this trade
in *hand*, and to doe his best to follow it with his whole
heart.

Adde here vnto further, that a man, in this mer-
chandise, if he be *once* a trader, he can never *faile*, he
that is *once rich*, cannot be *beggerd*; if God doe *set up*
a man, he is past *falling downe*, our spirituall stock can-
not breake.

You never read in all Gods booke, nor never heard
in the whole world, of any (if you were *rightly* infor-
med) that was *undone*, since the dayes of our first fa-
ther *Adam*, since his time, none hath ever *broke*, of all
that were *truly free* of the body of Iesus Christ: this
corporation never had *one Bankrupt*, no not *one*, of
all those that ever traded in these *true treasures*: for
these riches have power to *preserve themselves* whe-
re they are once planted, and also to *preserve those* to
whome

The 1st of all. THE BEST MERCHANDISE.

whome they are planted; there is vertue in them to sustayne those that have them, that nothing in *heaven*, *earth*, or *hell*, no *angell*, *man*, or *devill*, are able to bereave vs of them; they are given vs by him who gives vs (by his Chrift) ability, to stand with them, and that against.

both the *seynce*,
and the *subtile*.

assaults, wherewith Satan, either immediately by himself, or by any *meanes* of his, shall attempt, by *power*, or by *policy*, to overturne vs. The Lord doth arme vs with *strength* against his *force*, with *wisdom* against his *fraude*.

That we may be able to stand fast and firme, in the evill day, and to acquit ourselves as *men*, yea, as *men of God*, against the Divell, who is Gods enemy, and ours.

They that teach otherwise, and tell the world that men may fall *frailly* from *saving grace*, are but Satans *imposers*, to *abuse* the stability of the Graces of the holy Ghost; and to *abuse* the riches of our soules, making them as *marable*, & as *moveable*, as those of our body; and concerning all such, as doe say they may be *lost*, I thinke it may be most safely sayd; that (of these men) these true & never fading treasures, were never *founde* he that doth perswade others that a man may fall *for ever* from it, was never yet made a partaker of any whit, of the true *preserving power* of it.

Assuredly it is no small mischeife the devill doth these men, in telling them *this*, and setting them *as*, to teach others soe to beleeve; because he well knowe's that (which their *styes* doth not understand;) that, he that beleeveth, all the grace he can get, may be *lost* (and himself become a *lost child* after he hath got-
ten

ten it) can never seeke after saving grace, as he may obtayne it.

For why? it being not attaynable but by.

both, our *most earnest* and *affectionate* desires,
and, our *most unfeigned*, and *viuent* endeavours

What man can have any *hert*, to addresse himself vn-
to either of these, when he knowe's before (hand, he
shall get *nothing*, but *that*, which (when in both kindes
he hath done his best) may come to *nothing*. This is
no small *indignity*, to God, and *injury* to vs: *indignity* to
him, to deny him *double honor*.

the honour of his *graces*, in their just *valuation*,
the honour of our *services*, in their due *affection*
and *injury* to vs it is also, in that it keepes vs in-capable
of those *graces*, which should preserve vs, inasmuch as
we are soe *meanely* perswaded of them, that they
are not able to preserve vs. The man that is not per-
suaded of the *power of Grace*, shall never be partaker
of the *power* of it: that hart that doth not thinke it
can *keepe him*, is not fit to *keepe* it. God speaks better
to vs, when he tell's vs, that by *grace we stand*,) and
that so *strongly*, that we can never *irreuerable* fall. It is
for the world, & for deceitfull riches to yeeld *bankrupts*
and *beggery* companions: it is for *vaine men* in whome
is no *constancy*, or *confidence*, or *conscience*, to vndoe such
as they deale withall: it is for *mortall* and *corruptible*
things, to fayle, and leave vs in *poore* estate. The things
of God are such as, the world can,

neither *haue* from him,

nor *take* from vs.

We cannot *haue* them from the *worlde*, therefore
cannot the world *haue* them from vs, for what they can
not *giue*, is *not* in their power to *deprive* any
man

man off.

Now who would not meddle in that busines, wherin *never man did misferry*? who is not in love with that trade, that never yeelded *one bankrupt*, but wherein every man who tradeth prospereth?

And vnto this consideration, cast in yet, *one more*, and that is the *honour* that followeth these merchants, (of which something was before spoken). In the world many men toyle much, and get *no wealth*; many doe attayne *wealth*, which yet attayne not *honour*; but here whosoeuer trades growes *rich*; and none are *enriched*, but the same are also *honoured*; and that of God, who doth preferre vs to some spirituall, and diuine dignities, while we are *on earth*, (making vs *Kings* over *Sin*, *Satan*, and the world;) but the *most*, and *best* honours, are reserved for vs on high, when we shalbe preferred to those *heavenly places*, & promotions, wherein we shalbe *happy*, as long, as the Lord himself doth inhabit in the *heaven of heavens*. This traffike ever brings *riches*; these *riches* ever bring *honour*, and *glory*, partly, on earth.

perfectly, in heaven.

Now *all men* love wealth: *most men* love honour: why then come *hither*, all you that love *riches*, and feede on *both* to your fill, for here you may be, nay, you shall be, both *rich*, and *honorable*; these *two* are never parted in our heavealy trade, but doe ever goe *together*, though in the worlds affayres, they are often founde a *sunder*.

Let vs then, (for conclusion) of all collect all these things we have spoken and heard: and vpon consent given vnto them, be it our care to addresse our selves, with all spirituall industrey, and diligence herevnto, It were a *foole*, yea a *usefull shame* to vs, to know there

were

were such a beneficiall trade, and to be *no-body* in it; and soe much the rather, because if we be *any-body* we shalbe *rich*, and if we be *rich*, we shalbe *honourable*.

both in *Gods account*, while we live.

and in *Gods kingdome*, when we dye.

They *alone* shalbe able to stand before the Lord at the *last day*, who have gotten some of this wealth; all others whether *infidels* without the church, or *unfaithfull Christians* within it; shall hang downe their *heads*, and be *banished* from all hope of blessednes; and *abandoned* vnto eternall malediction.

Among men he that hath *little money* may have *much honesty*, but with the Lord, it cannot be *soe*; he who hath not this riches, is a wretched, and forlorne creature for ever: and as Princes that are *honorable*, and *mighty*, doe not, nor will, receive either base *vagabonds* who have *noe* calling, *noe* busines, or, place of abode, or villanous and wilfull *bankrupts*, who might have beene more *honesty* & *upright*; into their dominions, & make them the *Peeres*, and principall *officers* of their kingdome; but *disdayne* and drive them away, with *contempt*, and *scorne*: soe, neither will, or can, the Lord, admit any spirituall *beggers* or *bankrupts*, into his kingdome to make them *any-body* there; but with infinite indignation, he will send them from himself, into the kingdome of darknes, there to be *dammned* for ever.

In the world it is (*as the worst*) but a *CROSS* not be *rich*; bu to be voyd of *these riches*, is noe lesse then a *CYRSE*; the other cannot be *attayned* by many, doe what they can: but these are never *wanted*, but only in them, by whome they are *neglected*; which neglect is insufferable in the sight of the living God, who will not *endure* to let the *abuse* of his *kindnes*, *patience*,

long suffering & goodnes (whereby they might have bene enriched) to goe *unavenged*; but will reward them to their face, who are soule in this fearfull offence.

As ever (then), we hope to holde vp our heads for ever, and ever, before the God of Gods, and to be happy in his heavenly glory: soe let vs settle our selves, (and that in our soules) hercvnto, that we may appeare before him *comfortably*, at that day, and live from *that time*, in glory with him *beyond all time*.

Let not this world *totally* take vp our harts, to rob and bereave vs of a *better*: [*Loue not the world, nor the things of the world*] that is *predominantly*; it is Gods owne counsell, and backt with no small reason, [*for if any man loue the world, the loue of the father is not in him*] and it is also Christs counsell, that we [*labour not for the things that perish*] that is soe *infamously*, as we should doe, for those that *perish not*: for if we doe *soe loue* the world, and *soe labour* for it, as we should doe for these *better things*, we cannot soe *looke* after these as we ought: neither will the Lord *looke after* vs, as we would, But if the *best loue*, and *labour*, of our harts, be after these *best things*; we shall *surely* attaine *them*, yea we shall attayne *him*, and he will also *enterayne vs*, with that most worthy *welcome* [*well done good and faithfull seruaunts, enter into thy maisters joy*] which joy, because it is *endles*, I will *end* in the mention of it,

desiring, that all that hath beene
spoke, may affect vs, *aright*
towards it.

Glory be to God on high



ERRATA.

Pag.	Lin.	Error.	Correction.
19.	29.	<i>incenes.</i>	nicenes.
22.	28.	<i>or.</i>	our.
24.	19.	<i>dronond.</i>	drowned.
34.	30.	<i>it.</i>	if.
35.	24.	<i>by not be.</i>	be not by.
	25.	<i>challeagne.</i>	challenge.
37.	28.	<i>them</i>	then.
40.	12.	<i>debts.</i>	debts.
41.	17.	<i>the is</i>	those.
49.	14.	<i>in</i>	it.
69.	26.	<i>proydis</i>	provide.
75.	7.	<i>so ever.</i>	ever to.
79.	1.	<i>sherpely.</i>	sharply.
94.	5.	<i>of any.</i>	of my.
97.	8.	<i>our place.</i>	one place.
105.	16.	<i>admissa.</i>	amisse.
111.	20.	<i>upon where.</i>	wherevpon.

words to be put in.

47. 6. *send to their.*
63. 16. *either to buy.*
101. 7. *chose, he had to doe.*

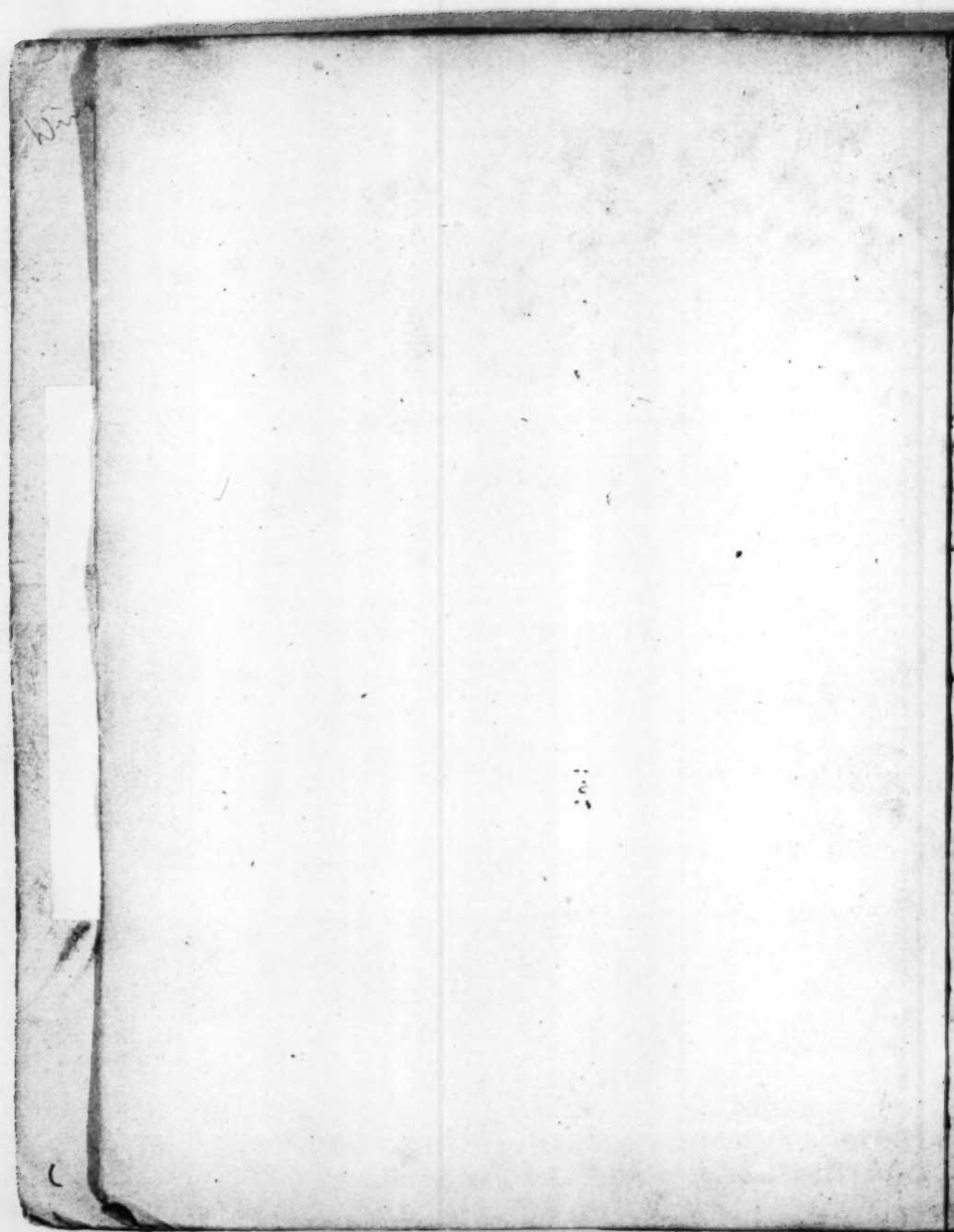
words to be put out

110. 31. *in haue.*

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J. Beaton
THE
BEST MERCHANDISE
OR A CLEAR DISCOVERY OF

The evident *difference*, and admirable *advantage*, be-
twene our traffike with *God*, for the true
treasure; and with *men*, for tem-
porall commodity.

WHEREIN IS SHEWED

That our Spirituall trading is both free from all the evill, &
full of all the good, which is incident to civill com-
merce; yea, that is overflowed with divers
excellent prerogatives, which the
affayres of the earth can-
not yeelde.

Preached at *Middleburgh* in *Zeelande*, immediately
before the remoovall, of the famous fel-
lowship of *Merchant Adventurers*
of *England*, from thence, vnto
Delft, in *Holland*.

And now published, and dedicated, to the honour and use, of
that whole society, there, or either
where, residing.

By *IOHNNY WING*, a true harted wellwiller, to their tem-
porall, and eternall good, with *God* and *men*.

Pro. 23. 23. Buy the truth, but sell it not.

AT PLYSHING,

Printed by *Martin Abraham vander Nolck*, dwelling
at the signe of the *Printing house*, 1622.

SOCIETAS ADVENTVRARIA
 (*Ana-gramma.*)
 RE-RATA VIVIS DEO SANCTA.



What er'e can be *concluded* from a *N A M E*
 Yours doth *include* : all happines and fame.
Thus spel'd, *thus* anagram'd, is boade's your *Rise*,
 Then which, there cannot be, a happier *State*,
 With *MEN*, t'enjoy your *reconfirmed* *G L O R I E*;
 And with your *G O D* to be reputed *H O L I E*.
 What can I wish, but *T H E S E*, with all *increas'd*
 And after *T H E S E*, those joyes that never *cease*;

TO THE
Right Worshipfull, & my worthy freinds
Master EDWARD BENNET, Deputy, the
Assistance and Generality of the famous Fel-
lowship of Merchant Adventurers of
England, residents at Delft
in Hollandt.

IOHN WING, wisheth all Temporall,
Spiritual, and Eternall happines, here,
and in heaven.

I Am bolde, (beloved, and much respec-
ted in the Lord) to send this demonstra-
tion of my dearest affection after you;
not, that that I account it any competent
recompence, but that you will (as I hope)
receive it as some greatfull remembrance of those
your greater favours, which you have soe kindly
communicated vnto me. Some taffe hereof, you had
while I was soe happy as to speake (now and then) in
your hearing, and because that was but a taffe, (yet
well favoured of such as heard the same) I could not
deny, or discourage, the Christian desire of any, who
were affected to feede more fully thereupon, It was
the last message that I delivered among you from
God; and therefore, inasmuch as you were vpon your
immediate remoovall, to attayne a more happy cour-
se of commerce with men, I thought it my part and du-
ty (therein) to doe my best, for the furtherance of
your most happy traffike with the Lord; that you
might

7 14614

EPISTLE DEDICATORIE.

might (if by any *possibility*, I might helpe) be prosperous both in heaven and earth at once; and grow abundantly rich, in body *temporally*, and in soule; and body, eternally together. And God, who is Lord over all, and rich vnto all, grant, that you may enjoy this *double blessednes*, to the greatest prayse of his most glorious name, and the everlasting peace, and welfare, of your owne hartes, and states, *for ever* before him. To his grace and loue, I commend you *all* for ever; and to you *all*, (and to your loue,) I commend this my poore endeavour; nothing doubting, (yet earnestly desiring,) your kinde acceptance of the same, from *him*, who resolveth ever to remayne.

Yours, in all vnfayned affection

for good.

JOHN WING,

From my house in Flushing.

March. 26. 1622.



The summe of the Sermons.

God who compare's his kingdome to your trade.
Would have you (Merchants) like his kingdome made,
Whereto, sincerely if you doe endeavour,
Both rich, and blessed, shall you be for ever,
For why? all things most sweetly doe combyne
To raise rare profit by Commerce divine.
It standeth wholly of advantages,
There is no feare of losse, or damages.
Adventures, Sales, Exchanges, Bartars, Debts
All are secure, all gainfull, nothing lets.
Th' Adventure's nothing, it's by th' almighty borne,
Who for your safety, by himself hath sworn,
That maugre, sin, and all the devills in hell
Your soules estate, for ever shalbe well.
Your Sales are happy; of your sin thars naught.
And that you Bartar, for the grace, Christ bought.
And soe you make most rich Returnes, and quick
To give the best, for worst, God doth not stick.
The Exchange, is gainfull, ever in each place;
Lesse bringeth more, we still get grace for grace.
The more (on good occasion) we deliver.
The more we doe receive, from this free giver.
Nee desperate Debts, or Bankrupts in this trade,
God is the Creditour; Christ Surety made.
And both, have bound themselves to pay to us.
The principall, with gracious overplus
Nor needs you doubt: Bad Servants should deceive.
You lay out all your self, and all receive.
There is no trusting other agents here.
Each man, his owne eternall state shall beare.
And if so th' reckoning day we wisely looke
When our great Master will peruse his booke.
Th' account will rise most happy to our share
That sweetest voyce, with glad some hearts we heare.
Come faithfull servant, take your masters joy
Possesse eternall blisse, without any
Loe here, is hea ven for earth, for trash, true treasure

For some few cares and paynes, Joy without measure
Glory for greife, eternitie for ages,
For little works, immortall, endless wages.
My soule doth wish you were such Merchants all,
That he who to himself, his owne will call,
May take you all, vnto that blisse aboue you
Next vnto Him, (and his Vice-roy) I loue you.

The methode of the whole matter.

The Excellency of the best merchandise, doth appeare, in the consideration of 3. things.

FIRST, that it is free from all the evils of ciuill trade, there being in it.

No Adventure.

No Bad Debts.

No Bad Wares.

No Bad Servants.

SECONDLY, that it is full of all the good, that ciuill trade hath: for therein we have ever

Good Sales.

Best Bartars.

Exellent Exchange.

THIRDLY: that it overfloweth with much more good, then is to be found, in mans commerce, because

All our busines is

in one place,

with one party,

for one commodity,

All is given vs which we deale for.

All we deale for, is exceeding good, without any evil.

Our greatest good commeth when we have done trading.

The best Merchandise.

OR, Tradeing for the true Treasure.

WHEREIN

The excellent *difference*, and admirable *advantage*,
that is betweene *spirituall*, and *temporall*
traffique, is clearely layd open, and
discovered.

In ceertaine Sermons on *Pro. 3. 14. 15.*

14. *For the merchandise thereof, is better then the
merchandise of silver, and the gayne thereof, is
better then fine golde.*

15. *She is more precious then rubies: and all the
things thou canst desire, are not to be compared
as her.*



I readily appeareth to every under-
standing reader, that *these* words doe
contayne an evident reason of that
which is avouched in *those* that goe
next before them in the 13. verse.
In which *verse*, we heare the spirit of
God magnifying (and that with his *owne* mouth that
cannot *lye*) the most happy blessednes and welbeing
of *that man*, who hath attayned true wifdome and vn-
der

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derstanding. [*Happy (or blessed) is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding*]

Now, what is *propounded* in those words, is *proved* in these, the *proposition* is in that 13. verse, the *confirmation* in this 14, & the 15. the thing that is made *knowne* there, is made *good*, here.

It is Gods manner to *ratify* and *confirm*, what he doth *reueale* vnto vs. It cannot be doubted but that *one word* of his mouth, were enough to satisfy a *million* of *worldes*, howbeit he will not only *say* a thing but he will also *shew* the same to vs, and make it plaine, that his words are agreeable to *reason*. And that this may be apparant, it is his good pleasure *sometimes* to borrow his evidence from *our* affaires, & those things that are *familiar* with vs here below, either in our *nasrall*, or *civill* estate. We must confesse it to be much favour, that he will afford vs *any* confirmation of what he affirms, seing his word *alone* is soe worthy to beleeued. But his kindnes doth much more excell, when he will cleare his truth by such *assurance*, as we may most *easily* apprehend, and *rightly* vnderstand, according to the light of that reason which we have in our owne ordinary busines. Nothing is more sure, then that the *mysteries* of his kingdome doe infinitely surpass all humane reach and capacity, and are *soe wonderfull* for vs to know, we may much sooner be amazed at them, then acquainted with them. The well is deepe (yea bottomlesse) and we have nothing to draw with. Howbeit, the Lord lend's vs *buckets*, and send's vs to such things as may enable vs (in some measure) to see & search them out, that we may beholde these *secret* things with *open face*, shyning vpon vs, & shaddowed to vs, in such particulers wherof we are more capable and

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3

and apprehensue.

Sometimes, the Lord send's vs to search out his truth, in the *creatures* that are either, *aboue*, *about*, or *below* vs, *the heavens*, *the earth*, and all things *betweene* both, shall teach vs.

Sometimes, he send's vs to our *selues*, and will haue vs goe no further then *home* to learne; our owne estate of *body*, and *soule*, shall be our instructor, and arguments grounded vpon what we *see*, what we *feele*, & what we *finde*, & vnderstand in our selues *inwardly*, *outwardly*, or *both wayes naturally*, shall *vnfolde* some heavenly lesson to vs.

And sometimes our *ciuill* profession shall perswade vs of some *spirituall* assertion; God will argue with vs from our *traffike*, and commerce with men, and those *celestiall* and diuine passages which are betweene him and vs, shall be enlightened and enlarged, by those *temporall* matters, that fall out betweene *vs* and *others*; our *earthly busines* shall further our *heavenly blessednes*, in the things that belong to the eternall benefit of our *soules* and *bodies*.

This singuler and sweete variety of manifestation of Gods truth vnto vs, doth evince *both* the *unspeakable* abundance of *our* blindnes, and infidelity, (shewing that we haue no ability of our owne to see, or to assent, to the holy sayings of God) and that *inconceivable* grace of *his*, which doth superabound, in rendering these apparant declarations of them vnto vs; where vpon if we fasten not, our *ignorance*, and *unbeleife*, will grow *vnterly* inexcusable, and our state *desperately* incurable before the Lord, by them *both*.

We may now see with shame enough, what *inherent* grace is *naturally* in vs, (wherin some haue soe *grossly* gloried)

THE BEST MERCHANDISE

gloried) what vnderstanding and beleeuing harts we have, when *such* a point as this must be proved to vs, and that, we doe not *know* nor can *beleue*, that he that getteth true *wisdome*, is a happier man, then he that attayneth temporary *Wealth*, though *God* speake it, vnlesse also he give vs a *reason* for it. But hoping that (*now*) we see cause to *blame* our selues throughly, and *blesse* him vnfaynedly: come we to consider of the reason here given vs of *God*, and lying in the words that we have read, [*For the merchandise sherof is better &c.*]

Which words contayning a manifest reaso to settle vs in the truth of that mans *benediction*, who hath gotten any *spirituall* riches, aboue *his*, that is stored with all *temporall*: doe shew themselves to be a *rattification*, arising from our *civil* profession, and it seemeth to be framed and intended by the *wisdome* of *God*, as if in others words he had spoken *thus*.

The World thinks that man well, & accounts him happy, who hath gotten great store of silver, golde, pearle, and precious stones: he is a blessed man who hath abundance of wealth; especially, if it hath beene attained by payne, diligence, industry and providence in some lawfull and honorable employment (because it may fall vpon fooles by succession, deede of gift, legacy, or the like) *he is the man that goes currant among men for one in good case, that needs care for nothing, nor feare anything*

Now, saye's *God*, if he be soe *happy*, and soe *high* in your estimation, that hath thus risen to a *great estate* in his earthly condition: know assuredly, that the man *I meane*, must be beyond him, whome *you magnify* in this manner, inasmuch as all he hath, is but *base trash*, in comparison of that *true treasure* whereof I speake;

A.

golde

THE BEST MERCHANDISE.

golde, silver, & such things, are not worthy to be once named, with wisdom and vnderstanding, these doe as farre exceede all temporary *reuerences*, as the most precious and prizelesse stones, doe over vauelw the *flynts* or *pibble* stones of the high way, or the streete.

And soe much the more assuredly *felicitated*, is the hap-pines, and excellency of their estate, by whome they are *gotten*, then his was, to whome they were once *giuen* without any merchandising, or meanes at all vsed to obtayne them. I am sure it prooued too true in the first *Adam* who *quickly* lost, those excellencies which came soe *lightly*: whereas that which is gotten for us by Christ, and gotten by us in Christ, is not subject to such easy miscarriage. The first *Adam* was like to *one*, who without any thought, and beyond all expectation of his *owne*, had mighty *power* and riches be-fallen him: and we (*in him*) were like foolish and pro-digall *heires*, that not considering whence our excel-lency came, and what it *cost*, neither he for his *owne* part, nor in *our* person, cared to keepe it, but *lost* it, and let it soone goe, to the vtter *undoing* of himself, and his poste-rity. He (& we in him) had it easily, without any mer-chandising, or any meanes at all (by him) vsed, it came vnto him *naturally*, he that gave him *nature* gave him *grace*, he was *created* holy and righteous, to be a *man*, and to be soe *excellent*, were both *one*, to him. But with the second *Adam* it is not soe (in regard of the elect in him) he hath merchandised with his father for vs, & payd deare for the purchase of vs, & what graces are acquired for vs, & attayned by vs in him, are not *easy* to be takē from vs, because they came soe *hardly* to vs.

This is the coherence, and generall summe of our *text*, it being a *reason* to perswade men, to be enamou-red

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red with that wisdom and vnderstanding which the former verse doth mention, and commend, that soe, we having (once) entertayned *it* into true, and *entire affection*, might the more eagerly endeavour (by all meanes) to get it into our *possession*.

And this reason (if we marke it well) may be observed to be *rising*, and *gradual*, from one step to another; for when the Lord saith that *wisdom* is better then any worldly *wealth*, he begin's with *silver*, which will buy any *meaner* commodity, then he goes on to *golde*, yea *fine golde*, which is farre better then *silver*; from thence, to *precious stones*, which are richer then *golde*, and least any thing vnder heaven, might seeme, either in it *self*, or in any mans *conceit*, to be equall, or neerer, vnto these in *worthynes*, he add's, that, not only what any man *hath*, or may have, but all that can be *desired* by any man, is not comparable, to the *invaluable* benefit and advantage, that commeth to vs by *abese*.

Thus having surveyed the *generalities* of these words in their *drift*, and *scope*, we will now come neerer, vnto a more particuler enquiry into them, as they lye in their order before vs.

[*For*] This word [*For*] is diversly vsed in scripture, but *usually* (though not *uniuersally*) it is a *rationall* word, or a word inferring a *cause* or *reason*, of something that went before, and when it is *for*, it noteth
the *efficient cause* of a thing. Rom. 8. 2.
the *finall cause*. Rom. 11. 36.
the *impulsive cause*. Mat. 5. 11.

Yet at other times, it noteth no cause at all, but is only
either, an *affirmation*, as Gen. 28. 16.
or a *connexion*. Ioh. 15. 15.

or an

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or an *interrogation*. Mar. 9. 11.

or a *declaration*. Gen. 20. 7

or a *signe, sequell, or effect*. Mat 25. 35. Luk. 7. 47.

I observe these manifolde *sences* of it, that we might not (*ever*) imagine it to argue, a *reason*, or *cause* (as the *papist* doe) who most *absurdly* presse it vpon vs for a *cause*, in many places where it is but a mere *consequent*, conceiting it often to be a *reason*, and (without reason) obtrudeing it as a *reason* to vs, where it is *none*.

In our text it is a *reason* indeede, and sheweth why that man is in better case that hath *wisdome*, then he that hath ought *els*, because *wisdome* is better then all other things he can compassse: *heavenly graces*, are incomparably more excellent then *earthly riches*, therefore, is he most blessed that obtayneth *them*.

[*The merchandise*] you that are *Merchants* cannot but know the english of this word, it being a *metaphor* borrowed by God from your owne busines. In religion no such word can be *naturall*, or found in his proper sence and signification, inasmuch as it importeth *necessarily*; that which is an absolute, and ytter *impossibility*, in the things that passe betweene the Lord and vs. In *merchandise* men give to each other, the *full worth* & valew of the things received by *bargaine* or contract, both parties are contented, and rest satisfied with that, which *interchangeably* passeth from the one to the other, and either challengeth *his owne* by right.

In this *merchandise*, and our dealings with God we are soe farre from any such proceedings, that we cannot render to him one *farthing* of our owne, for the infinite good he *conferreth* vpon vs, and casteth most kindly vnto vs, we can *giue* nothing to him, nor (by any *right* of our owne) *claime* any thing from him,

we

we doe not *buy* at all, but we *beg* all.

Reasons
why we
are sayd
to buy
Wisdome.

And yet the Lord is pleased to make vse of *such* words as are assumed (as was sayd) from our *civill* conversation, and jmployments; the *better* to shew vs the *best* things, by that *light* wherewith we may most easily discern them. Neither is this done (as I conceive) without all respect of some good *reason*, which may be rendered herof; among *many* others that might be produced, I propound these *few*, to serious consideration.

I Reason. First, to tel vs, that (*now*) grace, and goodnes are not *naturall* to vs, as (*once*) they were in the first *Adam*, who (as we noted even now) had this *wisdome* and vnderstanding created in him, and conse'rd vpon him with his *being*.

He had it without any *a-doe* on his part, he was no sooner a *man*, then he was *wise*, & *gracious*, & had this blessed vnderstanding in him. It is nothing *see*, but much otherwise, now, we must *get* that, which was *given* him, he had it with woderfull *facility*, our attaynement will be with some *difficulty*. It is two things (*now*) to be a *man*, and to be *holy*, it is

not nature

but endeavour

that must bring vs to *grace*, if we ever have it: it is become an *art*, to be excellent, there is a *mystery* in it, we must be *bound* to it, and *serue* for it, before we can be free of their *corporation* who enjoy it, namely those alone that are *incorporated* (by *grace*) into Christ Iesus.

Noe man is *borne* a naturall merchant, neither can any be *naturallly* religious, it must be *sought*, it must be *bought*, we must be trayned vp in this *trade* of heaven, this cunning comes not by *kinde*, it will coste time, and paynes,

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paynes, to be well seene into this *science*. We must be *heavenly merchants*, if we wil hope to be *happy men*.

Secondly to shew vs some semblance, betweene *your* ^{2.} Reason
civill and *his* spirituall, *his* true, and *your* temporary merchandise.

Some semblance I say, for *some* there is, (yet not very *much*) and *some* is enough to Gods purpose, and sufficient to teach vs *some* blessed lessons, out of our owne booke. Indeepe the only reason why there is *no* more currant consimilitnde betweene them, is the *better* being of Gods merchandise aboue *mans*, the *one* doth see wonderfully overgoe the *other*, that in many particulars, *earthly* merchandise is neither *able*, nor *worthy*, to become a shaddow, or representation, of the *heavenly*.

That correspondence that is, must be conceived in the *true*, *strict*, and *wise* sence, of this, and other such words as are in vse among *merchants*, to these *civill* ends, which we will so farre apply to *spirituall* purposes, as any warrantable, and sound *concurrence* will goe with vs in the *analogy* of faith, without any vaine or fruitles *fancy*, of our owne.

Would we *then* see in what sence heavenly things may be called a *merchandise*, and in what sence *not*; this is easy to him that will vnderstand.

In one *mayne* thing it holdeth *not*, for (as we heard a litle before) in all merchandising there is *mutation*, and change of *one* good thing, for *another*, commodity for commodity, or *money* for *ware*, to the iust and estimated *value*, of the rate, and worth of the things *bought*, or *barsared*: but (*thus*) cannot we merchandise, or *trade* with the most high, we can neither *buy*, nor *barter* with him, because we want what to *give* him, not

B

only

THE BEST MERCHANDISE.

only to the *full worth*, but we can give him nothing of *any worth* to purchase those *most worthy* favours, and advantages, whereof all his people are free partakers. It were intollerable pride, and presumption not to be put vp, or endured, at our hands, that we that are *vile*, and *worthles* by sin, having *all* evill, and *no* good thing in vs at all, should *once* conceit or harbour *one* thought, of trading with God vpon any such tearmes of satisfying him for the *least fauour* we have either in *whole* or in *part*, with any thing that is ours. Soe that (*herin*) the merchandise (on our part) is marred, because we have nothing to trade with.

Yet (in diuers other regards) it holdeth good, and is very justifiable if we take good notice

First that God doth call and, encourage vs to this celestial *commerce*, and bids vs come and *buy* of him.

So saith Solomon. Pro. 23. 23. *buy the truth*

So saith Isaiah: Cap. 55. 1. *come buy without silver*] So saith Christ Reu. 3. 18. *I counsell thee to buy of me*]

Beholde, *he* will account vs *buyers* and will have vs come to *buy*, who knowe's we have nothing at all to *pay*:

And soe much the more *strange*, may this seeme to be if withall we remember, that it cannot be found in any place, that God is sayd to be a *seller*, or to *sell* vs any thīg which he would have vs *buy*: these two words (in all mens *reason*) are proper *relatiues* one to another yet the Lord will part, and make a *rent* betwixt them, saying we shall *buy*, that which he no where saith he wil *sell*: it is not read in all Gods booke, that ever he *solde* any goodnes to any man, but that which we have from him, is every where called his free and must gracious

cious gift vnto vs.

Now & then, the Lord is sayd to sell his people into their enemyes hands, as in the *bookes of Iudges*, and in the *Psalme*, the church thus complayneth. [*Thou sellest thy people for nought and takest no money for them*] but this kinde of *sale*, is no such *selling* as is opposite to the *buying* before spoken off, nor doth it any way *match*, the *merchandise*. But how then (wil some say) can we be sayd to *buy* of God, whenas he cannot be sayd to *sell* to vs? why *thus* it may be, and it may be the Lord would teach vs out of *his kinde* of *selling*, (though it be of another *kinde*) what he himself doth intend, and would have vs to vnderstand by *our buying*, thus. His *selling* of his people for nought, did note the *small respect*, the *base esteeme* he had of them, when their notorious naughtines they had deserved his neglect, and provoked the eyes of his glory against them, to cast them out of their good land, and send them captiues among *Pagans*. We our selves when we have a *jade* of ill qualities, will put him off to any man for litle or nothing. Now our *buying* may be *smelt* by the contrary herevnto, and by *it*, must needes be meant our *great* care, regard, and estimate, of the graces which the Lord is pleased (in his grace) to bestow vpon vs, that we have them in singuler respect, and most gracious account, as we would doe: that *plase* or those *jewels*, which cost vs more deare.

So then God *solde* his people without money, when he did *disrespect*, and *reject* them: we *buy* without money, when we *prize*, and *repute* highly of his graces. It is not (we see) any *money matter*, to manage this *merchandise*, whatsoever we *buy*, there is nothing to *pay*, but something to *performe*; the driving of this trade

Quest.

Answ.

cōsisteth in *action*. He is a *good dealer*, that is a *good doer*,
 All that we give for heavens *inestimable* excellencies,
 is our truest valuation, our highest estimate, and the
 dearest account of them, we are able to expresse, when
 we have once knowne, and felt their *worth* within our
 soules: if we prize them preciouslly, our purchase is
 made; So did Paul, who accounted all things (euen the things
 which otherwise, were advantage to him) *losse*, & *dung*,
 and exceeding *vile*, as the basest *excrements*, in regard
 of the excellent knowledge of Christ. Soe did he in he
 parable, that solde all, to buy that *one pearle* which he
 found. And our Solomon tell's vs that we should all
 doe *soe*, and that if we *doe*, it wilbe *well* with vs, we shall
 surely *gaine* that, wherof we have *soe good respect*. And
 if we would be tryed by a well experienced *man*, one
 that knew how blessed it was to be possest of wisdome
 and vnderstanding, take *David* for the party, and his
speech for your *practise*. hereim he professes these things
 were to him, more deare then all things,

phil.

mat. 13.

pro. 2.3.4.
5.psal. 119.
72. 103.

better then thousands of golde and silver

sweeter then the hony, & the hony combe

With many more the like sayings, shewing his *rare*
 account of these graces, wherewith he was abundantly
 enriched. So then to *buy* wisdome, or to *merchandise* for
 it, is no more, then to repute it precious, & to thinke
 it *worth buying*, keeping it with all *care*, as we doe the
 best things we can *buy*, and making *much* of it, yea the
most we can make, both in opinion, and practise.

Secondly our attaine ment of wisdome, may be cal-
 led a *merchandise* properly, in respect of Christ,
 for he (on our behalfe) was indeede the *purchaser*
 of his fathers *mercy* to vs, and the *paymaster* of his
 fathers *justice*, for vs.

The

The apostle Paul tell's vs, that we are *bought with a price*, and the same doth Peter avouch also, and soe. *2. pet. 2. 1.* doe others, & well, and warrantably they may, considering how *deare* we are payd for, by him, who redeemed vs at a *high rate*, (I had almost sayd *too high a rate*) considering what base, debaused, and worthles creatures we were; *nothing*, worse then *nothing*; *vanity*, lighter then *vanity*: a whole world of such vile contemptible vermyne, cannot be esteemed worth a *drop of his blood*, noe nor a *haire of his head*: had it not beene that the *justice* of God was to be *satisfied*

the *faueur* of God to be *procured*

his *law* to be *fulfilled*

his *loue* to be *confirmed*

And all righteousnes to be wrought and accomplished: how had we (*unworthy wretches*) beene (*of our selues*) worth redeeming or respecting? noe, these *infinite*, most *excellent*, and *inconceivable* things of God, were worthy of the life, and death of *Iesw Christ*, to worke and bring them to that passe, that we might be interressed into them, through his purchase of them, Now our Lord & redeemer having *bought* vs, & *payd* an alufficient satisfaction for vs, & enabled vs (by his power) to attaine some saving grace, hence are we (in him) sayd to *buy grace*, through *grace*. For *merchandise*, or *buying* spiritually, is [*A word of Grace*] when it is attributed to *vs*, wherof we may be the better perswaded, if we remember that God is pleased to call the beginnings of his graces in vs his *earnest pennyes*, once, and againe, by *2. Cor 1. 22.* the apostle, thereby intimating (as it were) a *bargaine* betweene him & vs, because he would *hasten* & *cheere* vs, *Eph. 1. 13* in our holy course, as a *father* who hath an inheritaunce for his *son*, take's the *money* that any freinds giue him, & to make

make him the more willing to *part* with that, which he cannot *employ*, he tell's him, well, this you shall give me for this *house* and *lande*; & it shalbe *yours*, one day.

But to passe this, let vs labour to be *wise*, and *wary* beware, that in any wise we *binde not* the Lord to any words, he is *free* to chuse and vse what he pleaseth, is it not *great reason* that he should have *liberty*, of speaking who is *infinitely wise*; in every word he *speake's* and therefore when soever the Lord takes any word of *ours*, wherein we cannot discerne a cleare cōcurrence of his minde let vs sift the more narrowly for his intendment therein and blame our *blindenes*, that we cannot *see* it, as we should. It is not for *nothing at all*, though it may be but for some *one*, or very *few* things) that he makes choyse of these *civill* tearmes, to teach vs the knowledge and skill of *celestiall* truth thereby.

Let vs not therefore *slight off* these words, or looke with a shallow, or superficiall *eye*, vpon them, but take them into our most serious consideration to search out the meaning of God in them:

³
Reason. *Thirdly*, it is possible, the Lord aludes to *this word*, both here and elsewhere, to illustrate our *best being*, in the *best things* and call's his greatest *mercies*; and our cheifest *graces*, [*Merchandise*] because he would magnify and commend the course of a *merchants* life, to be lawfull, honest, and good, and a calling of his owne institution and allowance, in as much as he makes this *employment*, the *honourable embleme*, of these admirable excellencyes, in whose *enjoyment* we are truly blessed before him. If every christian that would be blessed must *merchandise*, can any christian conceit basely of *merchandising*? the scriptures *attestations* of the honour and excellency of this *practise*, *trade* and *state* of life,
are

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are *many*; I thought good to mention *this* among the rest, the better to muzzle and bung vp the malignant tongue of any foule mouth, that shall ever barke against it soe currisbly, and vncbristiauly, as diuers have done. And thus we see how and wherefore, these things are called *merchandise*, The next word followeth.

Thereof] that is, of the wisdom and vnderstanding spokē of in the 12, verse, whereby all graces are meant. It is a common thing through out the scripture, to notify all good, or euill, vnder some one grace, or vice of either sort; but it is more proper to *this booke*, then any other to propound

all graces, vnder the name of *Wisdom*

all vices, vnder the name of *Folly*.

Throughout the *Proverbs*; *Solomon* [wise man] is a compleat christian, furnisht with all *sauiug grace*: and he that is called [*a foole*] here, is the man, that is full of all impiety, and *prophanes*.

But let vs come a litle neerer to this word [therof] and we shall finde it to be added out of inspeakeable wisdom in God, and that *not only* to euidence the excellency of wisdom aboue wealth, but also, to difference, and distinguish *this merchandise*, from another, which is obtruded vpon millions of men and pretended yea pressed to be true, & *spirituall*, when as vpon due tryall, it will prove to be no better then *carnall*, and *diabolicall*, to cozen, to gull, and to delude, all such as deale in it, or meddle with it, who not knowing a *Pedler* from a *merchant*, doe take these *trifeling vanities*, for rich *commodities*.

I meane the *merchandise* of the [*Great whoore*] of whome, and of her merchants and the things the buy'es & sell's, *Saint Peter* sayes some thing, and *Saint Iohn*

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John sayes more in his *Revelation*. In which booke, (and in divers places therof), the Lord Iesus, doth at large lay her and her doings open, *that* all men may see how, with *whome* and *wherin*, she tradeth.

How she tradeth, let *Peter* tell vs, (even *that Peter*, whome they brag to be their *Patrone*) he hath evidently decyphered her vile dealing, to be *privy*, and *close*; *covetous* and *catching*; *counterfeit* and *sawning*: soe faith ye text: [*Who shall privily bring in damnable heresies*] and through covetousnes make merchandise of you: all whoores qualities, as right as can be.

2. pet. 1.
ver. 1.
ver. 3.
Re. 18. 3.
9, 22. *Wish whome*, she tradeth, *Saint John* tell's vs, who are her *merchants*, no meane men, no base fellowes, but *kings*, and *great ones* and that of *all nations* too, *Wherin* she tradeth: to wit, in any thing that may bring her in *silver* and *golde*, & *pompe* and *prife*, to gaine which, she sells *merits* indulgences, *masses*, *dispensations*, *trent* *alls dirges*, the fardle of all her fopperies is opened, & set to sale, yea to enrich her self, she cares not to make prize of the *soules of men too*, causing them to sell their *soules* to her, for such *toyces* as she tell's them, are *good for them* both *living* and *dead*, that she may sell them to the *divell*, for such things, as she knowe's are *good for her self*, to purchase more *honor*, *wealth*, and *power* to her kingdome:

These are her *wares*, and none but *she* may sell them, noe *monopoly* is like this; the *Divill* is sole *owner*, he will trust none but her to be his *factor*: *she*, none but her owne *bratts* to be her *broakers*: & soe this trade of *hellish trash*, is driven betweene them, and with it they *cunny-catch* mens consciences, and *catch money* out of mens purses, and for this *double damage*, give them some *jidle puppet*, or foolish vanity, that shall *trebble* it: all they

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they sell, hath this seale of a hellish, and infernall in-
vention, that *all the proffit* come's to the *seller*, he will-
be sure of money; the *buyer* hath nothing but fruitles
vanity. And soe they (*filly soules*) are gull'd to lay out
their *siluer*, and *golde*, and not for *bread*, or rather *but*
for *bread*, even then, when they hope, and beleuee
they have bought A GOD.

Now [*the merchandise therof*] is as much *worse* then
the *merchandise* of *golde*, and *siluer*, as this in our text
is *better* then both, and no man endued of God with
any vnderstanding, will once intermeddle *here*, the
only *traders*, are these infatuated *fooles*, whome

God hath given over to strong *delusion*:

the *Deuill* hath gotten into his *dominion*:

And these *mysticall sorts* doe suffer (nay joy to see)
them selves miserably abused by these *Catholike Inglers*
of whome they thinke they doe receive, the *orna-*
ments of Christ, whenas they have nothing but Anti-
christian *excrements*, and soe in steed of *adorneing* and
bewtifying their soules, they doe *defile* & abase them
out of measure.

For this cause, even because [*hereof*], doth the holy
Ghost insert most *wisely*, this word [*thercof*] that wise
men might be able to discern betweene the *merchan-*
dise of God, which evermore brings great *advantage*,
and that of the *man of sin*, which is never, more then
meere *cousenage*. Now put we forward to the next [*is*
better] that is to say, every way beyond it, in all kinde
of benefits and advantages. I cannot conceive the
word [*better*] to beare any *worse* sence here, then the
best it hath any where, because (as we shall shew when
we come vnto it) these *diuine graces*, doe so farre ex-
ceede all *wordly riches*, as no man can compleatly com-

C

pre-

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prehend and discover. There is no *comparison* betweene them, the one is not worthy to be named with the other; *Wealth* is scarce good enough to waye vpon *Wisdom*. But this is easy: we proceede.

[*Then Siluer: golde, yea, fine golde, &c.*] the Lord is not sparing (we see) to magnify *Wisdom*, in that he doth it in soe many words, which words doe import most *precious* things: and that (as was remembred before) by a *gradation*, or rising, from one good thing, to another that is *better* then it, and from that to another yet *better*: as we all know

Siluer to excede all commodities,

Golde to excede *silver*.

Precious stones to excede *Golde*.

And that no place might at all be left in mans hart, for any thought of a thing, that might seeme *better*, he putt's in all that *mans hart can desire*, or wish to enjoy, affirming, that to have saving grace, is a more happy thing, then to have *all things els*, that the soule of an earthly minded man could desire to have.

So that now we see what these words doe contayne, to wit, in the generall, a *confirmation* of that commendation of wisdom and vnderstanding, which is given vs by the holy ghost, in the verse going before.

This *confirmation* (if we descend into particulars) is *comparative*, & riseth from one good thing to another and from that to a *better*, to shew that wisdom is the *best* of all good things, and exceeding farre surmounteth all temporary commodities.

The parts are three.

1. the things compared, to wit, *Wisdom* & *Wealth*.
2. the wealth wherewith wisdom is compared: which is partly expressed: *silver, golde, precious stones*

stones, partly included: *all that thou canst desire.*
 3. the disproportion betweene them, which sheweth not only, that *wisdom* is *something better* then *wealth*, but also that it doth incomparably surpasse and exceede it.

Thus, being now come to the *sence*, and *parts* of the words, let vs put forward toward the *matter* that is containd in them: which that we may the better come to vnderstand, be it all wayes, well and carefully remembred and considered of vs, that inasmuch as it pleaseth the Lord to speake vnto vs of these *mysticall things* in such *manifest english*, as he doth, in calling it [A Merchandise] it shall well become vs to scan, and search, that we may see, how farre, and wherein, the *metaphor* doth mayntaine this truth; and make it appeare, that the odds and excellency lyeth here. And the more to enlighten vs herein, let vs proportion THIS, *merchandise*, and MANS together, comparing the one with the other, in such particulars; as wherein the correspondence will holde currant, and sound, by warrant from God.

To run through all passages, would be an endles race, and a fruitles endeavor, taking vp more time, then may be conveniently spared therevnto; we will not therefore goe *that course*, but strive to that way which may be *nearest*, and *clearest* to the truth here intended, medling only with such as are most *familiar* to our *notice*, and most *materiall* to our *purpose*, and in opening these, we will doe our best to shun all *extremities*, both of *incones*, and of *negligence*, because, as it is not good, to be *curious*, so is it naught to be *carelesse*, the one is *jale*, the other is *evill*, both are reproovable, especially in matters of *religion*. It shalbe safest

for vs to goe that *beaten* way wherein, we may looke for *Gods light* to guide vs, and to avoyd all, *corners*, and *by-patbes*. The *evidence* of his *Word*, to *comfirme* all we speake, the assurance of his *spirit*, to *comfort* and quicken vs in all that is *spoken*, are the things we should seeke for, the one makes it *sound* to our *conscience*, the other make's it *sweete* to our *experience*, let vs therefore labour for *both* these, that soe our instructions may become sensible to *you*, and *you* the more happy by *them*.

Well then, let vs approach to the mayne point; which we will first *propound*, & then *proue*. And this it is.

Doct.

GODS MERCHANDISE IS BEETER THEN MANS]: it is better being a Trader for *wisdom*e then for *Wealth*, for *Grace*, then for *Goods*, His commerce with vs, doth farre exceede *ours* with *one another*, and wilbe founde (every way) infinitely more beneficiall.

Who can doubt of this, that heare's the *Lord himself* both speake it, and vrge it, as he doth? especially if withall he remember, what *infinite* knowledge, and wisdom is in the Lord, that he is not as man, that he should be partially *over-affected* to any thing he *see's*, or weakely *over-seene* in any thing he *saye's*.

either touching his *owne graces*:
or touching our *commodities*;

To set the one at *too high a rate*, or to *undervalue* the other, but most *uprightly* to estimate *both*, in all *equality*, as they are, in their *owne ranke*, and *quality*. So that *his Word* which never fayled, were enough to worke any mans hart to a full assurance of the truth hereof: howbeit, because, we may meete with such faithlesse and vnbeleeving harts as *Thomas* had, who must *see* and *feele* before they will consent and confesse;

fesse; let vs come neerer, and take better notice of this truth, and we hope that in *handling* the point, we shall have our harts fully confirmed therein:

Let vs looke then, and pry into every particular, and (as it were) feele, and put our fingers into them, and we shall finde the *prooffes* of this doctrine as vndeniable to *evince vs*, as the *prints* in Christs body were to *convince him*: and foe from *propounding* what we say, we come now to *proove* the same.

That which we say is no more but this; that *this merchandise* with God, is better then *all merchandise* with *men*. God himselfe faith as much, and will beare vs out in that we say, by comission from heaven. But let vs se (will some say) *wherin* it surpasseth? nay (say we) see if you can, *wherin* it surpasseth *not*: come along, & let vs view some *few* things of *many*, that we might looke vpon, and you will *easily assent*, that this is a true saying: and that we may not be carryed into any *confusion* in our inquiry, and confirmation, let vs range those things into some order, which we produce for evidence in the point; and in every of them the *verity* of what we speake, will appeare vnto vs abundantly.

Let it then be *carefully* noted, and considered of vs, that in *three* speciall respects *this* trading hath preheminence beyond *yours*, and every respect may be in steed of a most apparant and incontroleable *reason*, to settle vs in the assured perswasion of the *superabundant* benefit of this heavenly and blessed traffike.

Know then, that to the better being of this *merchandise*, these things doe concurre.

1. that it *hath not* some things that *yours hath*,
2. that

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2. that it *hath* some things that *yours hath also*.
3. that it *hath* somethings that *yours hath not*.

Some things are *proper* to your *merchandise*, alone, to wit, all that are *bad*, as having any *damage*, or *danger* in them.

Some things are *common* to this with yours, to wit, all things that bring any *benefit*.

Some things are *proper* to this alone, and not *common*, or any way communicable to *yours*, to wit, all those most rare, excellent, and extraordinary prerogatives (which may truly be entituled *royall*) because they are not incident to *terrenall* trade, or temporary dealings, the things that are *below* cannot be capable of those *high* advantages, which this doth afford.

Now every of these will be most *willing* witnesses of our *proposition*, and support it against all cavill and contradiction. And if in the *prosecutiō* of them (considering I must make use of your words) I shall not be *foe neate*, and exact in your *artificiall* tearmes of trade, as the nature of Gods *Metaphor*, and the *allusions* therof, to your *merchandise* doth require, I hope you will remember; that your words are out of our *element*, yet we will ayne as neere as we can, for the illumination of your mindes in this matter, and if we speake *improperly*, pardon vs, because we affect, rather *evidence of proving*, then *art of speaking*, in Gods matters. Our drift and mayne scope is *divine*, (so should our *hearts*, and *tongues* be too) we care not to be *foe compleate*, and accurate in *tearmes*, as some are, who have more shew of *Retorike* in one sermō, then *substance of religion* in ten. And soe we come to shew the odds and excellency of this trade in each of these *three ranks* before remembred.

First,

First, this *merchandise* must needes be better then all other, because whatsoever is *bad* in yours, is not to be founde in this at all, it hath nothing that is any way evill, or *incommodious*: and in yours there are many things (of this kinde) much complained off: as namely.

Great, Adventures:

Bad, debts.

Bad, commodities.

Bad, servants.

Here is a *four-fold* danger, the *hazzard* at sea is much, *trusting* of it in sale is as much, many times your goods are *ill conditioned*, and some servants are *disbonestly mynded*: these are the meanes of many a merchants miscarriage, and vndoeing.

But beholde, this *merchandise* hath *none*, (no not one) of these, let vs sift every one by it self, and we shall see it to be foe. And first for *Adventure*, we may be assured here is none at all, nor none there can be. Heavenly things are subject to no hazzarde.

For your earthly, you must either *abide* the *adventure*, or *buy* the *ensurance*: here neede's *neither*. All traideing vnder heaven, in to all *clymates*, in all *commodities*, is more or lesse vncertaine, and dangerous, & in the *richest*, and *rarest*, there is most feare, because they are in places *farthest* *remote*. But in this trade which is from heaven, it is nothing foe.

God himself tell's vs that wealth hath *wings* and can, and will, fly from vs: that riches are *uncertaine*: *pro. 23. 5.*
that they are things that *perish*: yea, that they *perish*. *1. Tim. 6.*
in their vsing: nay, that they perish, before they come *1. Job. 2.*
to be vsed, even while they are *in transportation*. *17.*

And some of his saints can say it by experience, *Ionah. 1. 3*

who

who have fallen from a *mighy estate*, to *miserable pover-ty*, & some (*again*) risen from a *meane condition*, to *wonderfull wealth*.

Dan. 4.
17.

Yea some wicked men will witnes it too, who tell vs, that *he that is great*, *God is able to abase*; as it did well appeare in the *foole* in the Gospell, who let himself a *long lease of many yeares*, of all the land and revenue he had, & it was *canceld*, & *expired the same night*, within *few howres* after he had *sealed it*, vnto himself.

And if none of these had spoken it, your selves in that which *some have felt*, and *more haue scene*, would say it were as true as the Gospell, inasmuch as dayly newes comes of *shipwracks* from one coast, of *bankrupts* from another, what betweene *fellonious Pyrates*, vnskillfull *Pilots*, vnfaithfull *seruants*, ill *wares*, ill *weathers*, naughty *times*, improvidence in *buying*, oversight in *selling*, & a multitude more such miserable & *mournefull instances*, *millions* of men *sinke* in their states, and are *drown'd* in these snares of the world, what *heavy catalogues* of decayed men, come continually, who were thought *great*, and proue worth *little* or nothing? what *uncomfortable accounts* doth many a merchant *overlooke*? that look't for *advantage*, and hath lost of his *principall*, (yea it may be his, *whole principall*) & that by those *land pyrates* [I meane, not those *Bankrupts* whome the Lord doth humble, by *casualties*, incident to the *most honest* among men, whose *bars* are broken, more then their *states*, and more (it may be) for *other mens states*, then their *owne*, whose *soules* are more wofull for *wants*, wherewith to satisfy *others*, then for the *wants* they feelee *them selves*; these have both *Gods* comiseration, and *mans*] But the *Bankrupts* I meane are those which breake, with *God* and *men* both
at

at once, who

not necessarily

but villanously

make a *rupture* where none is, to *injure* others, and to *enrich* themselves, building their owne states vpon the *ruines* of many other mens, and in *one act*, committing a *fourde fold* felony, in robbing

God of his *goodnes*.

Men of their *goods*.

Themselves of their *honesty*,

Many of their *money*.

My soule hath a quarrell against these accursed *cormorants*, who deuoure multitudes, and draw them into wonderfull *miserie*, to make vp their owne *monsters*, not caring to overturne all *trade*, to raze the *foundation*; & *pillars* of a *common wealth*, for the support of themselves; those are the *vipers* of mankind, and the *bane* of the *body ciuill* that bred them; *liuing*, and *gaying*, as the *diuill* doth, only by the *undoing* of every body they deale with. The *theife* by the high way, the *pirate* at sea, the combination of all *robbers*, of all *roaners*, are farre short of these *fellons*: they *professe stealing*, and take as much as they finde, and a man knowe's what he lose's: *these* mysticall, and monstrous *villanes*, deceive and cofin vs, in the vse of our *loue* to them, *confidence* in them, *commerce* with them, that when we thinke we *lende* to doe them *good*, trust them with our *goods*, or trade with them to doe *our selues good*; beholde, their *fidelity* is become *fellony*, our *kindenes* is our *damage*, all is lost we let them haue: they grow *fat* with other mens *flesh*, and lyne themselves with the *skins*, which they teare from all such, as they haue traded withall.

All and every of these (with more that might be reckoned vp,) you know and acknowledge to be as *miserable*, as they are *manifest*, declarations of the dangerous and vnceertaine state of your merchandise, among men, and to that ill passe, are the *times*, and the *truth* of men, now come, that you often tell vs (and too truly) you know not *who* to trust, *how* to be sure of your owne, *whome* to deale withall, without feare of losse.

But in *this* trade and commerce wherof we treat, there is no such *matter*, nay, there can be noe such *mis carriage*, in one kinde or other: all is *secure*, *stable*, *firme*, and *infalible*, you neede not feare, or doubt any thing in the least. When we deale for our *soules*, we deale vpon *sure* *seetmes*, and that we might (as the Lord would haue vs) know this, we finde *him* very plentifully *ensuring* our spirituall estate vnto vs, by all kinde of confirmation that can be,

2. Cor. 20.

21

P. 89, 35

Heb. 6, 17.

18.

Yea, by his *whole self*, who being *wholly infinite*, yet doth engage his *whole infinit essence* (& all the vnspokeable *excellencies*, therein enclosed) that nothing shall faile, either of his *goodnes*, to vs, or of our *good*, from him. What hath Iesus Christ sayd in this case? *hath* he not assured vs that *hell* cannot preuaile, noe not the *gates*, that is, the *greatest power* of *hell* *hath* he not sayd, that *heaven* must faile, before one jot or tittle of that which is written for our *soules* comfort, shall be vnfulfilled? Did he not tell *Martha*, that that better part, which *Mary* had chosen, should never be taken from her? Hath he not bidden vs to lay vp for

our

our selves treasures in heaven, and assured vs against all perills, that no *vbrise* can reach it, no *ruff*, no *mouth*, corrupt or wrong it *all* this, and much more hath he sayd (of purpose) to establish our harts against all feare of any danger.

And as he hath *sayd thus much*, soe hath he *done much more*. He hath *actually* vndertaken to give vs all security, that can be desired in this case. He hath secured vs by his *life*, by his *death*, by all his *obedience*, both *active*, and *passive*, what he *did*, what he *endured*, his *rising* from the grave, his *ascending* into glory, and his *perpetuall intercession* for vs, at the right hand of his father; *all* is for vs; all this did he vndergoe (as it were) to *under set* and *prop vp* our harts, that we might be fully confirmed in the *sounde assurance* of all heavenly happines. These were all the *dangers* that might *mischeife* vs; and he hath endured, and gone through them, that we might be *free* from all feare of them, and having *spoyled* these powers, that opposed our best comforts, he hath *assured vs* that we cannot *perish*, nor be taken out of his hand; and bid's vs bee of good cheere, because he hath overcome *that world* of our enemies, that withstood vs, and made *utterly voyde* all the *vengeance* of the most pernicious aduersaries we had; that they cannot at all *endanger*, nor any way *impayre*, these precious benefits. *Surmount our grand enemy*; he is troden vnder our feete. The *world*, and our owne *flesh*; (his *two mayne*, and most *burisfull* instruments of our *evill*) they are vanquished *all*; *nothing* is left *but conquered*, *all* is *nullified*; that might trouble vs, in *this* our *infallible assurance*, touching these things.

And herevpon, have the saints of God, beene *bolde*, and borne vp themselves, with all *undaunted* resolu-

tion of spirit. [*I am sure my redeemer liueth, & that I shall*
Iob. 19. 25 see him] saith *Iob.* [*I beleeued therefore I spake*] saith *Dauid*
Pf. 116. 80 [*I know whome I haue beleued*] saith *Paul.* We haue a most
2. pe. 1. 19. sure worde] saith *Peter.* And we may all say, we haue a
 most sure God, to our father, who changeth not: a sure rock
 to our redeemer, who moveth not: a sure spirit to our
 comforter, who departeth not, but abideth by us for
 ever. Heere is sure worke of all sydes (we see), on Gods
 part, who would haue vs settle our harts, to make our
 election sure to our selues, for our owne parts. Never
 did any man, miscarry that was a true trader in this
 merchandise, but every soule who hath dealt soundly
 herein, was as ceartaine of his spirituall benefite, as of
 his naturall being.

Howbeit, notwithstanding all that is sayd, yea, or
 that can be sayd, the Diuell (who is a mighty looser, by
 the manifestation herof) doth all he can, to weaken, and
 infringe the faith of Gods elect, in this point of the
 faithfullnes of God, that they may (like his vassalls) feare
 where no feare is; he doth dayly fill their harts, with
 this & that difficulty, thrusting these, & those impossibili-
 ties into their thoughts, presenting a worlde of impedi-
 ments vnto them, to breede doubtfullnes, and distrust
 (yea, and despaire too,) in them, if by any meanes he
 may draw them therevnto, and affright them from
 that assistance, wherewith they may most boldely, safe-
 ly, and couragiously repose themselues, with joy vpon
 the Lord.

But let vs see what it is he opposeth, & vpbraideth
 vs withall? Nay, (will some say) what is it not, or whe-
 rewith doth he not terrefy vs? he sett's heauen, earth,
 & hell against vs, he perswaded vs, that all things are
 enemyes to vs.

Gods

Gods justice and severity.

Our owne sin and impiety.

His owne mallice and cruelty.

How are we able to witstand *any one*, much lesse, every one of these; they being *all farre* above our power.

Well, we confesse they are *too heavy* for vs to vndergoe, and would not only *endanger*, but overturne, and drowne all, if any one of them should be layd vpon vs: but as the case stands, there is noe *discomfort* in them at all, though they be *put all together*.

True is it, that God hath much against vs, but it is *as true* that there is absolute satisfaction made (on our behalfe,) and soe noe feare now, because *his anger* is appeased towards vs, *his fauour* purchased for vs, *his loue* promised to vs, all *reconciliation*, all *compassion eternally*, and *irrevokeably*, assured, and estated vpon vs.

It is also *as true*, that our owne sins are many, and mighty, and simply *insupportable*, and would sinke vs into the bottomeles pitt, if their *least weight* did lye vpon vs, but it is as true, that they are *freely and fully* forgiven, and we reputed as *guiltles*, and accounted as *innocent*, as if we had never committed any one of them: the Lord hath *layd strength* vpon one that is *mighty*: and (even the *strength of our sin*, the whole law) and the curse therof he that is mighty hath done great things for vs, in carrying the iniquities of vs all, and in being *made sin*, and *made a curse* for vs, that we might be *made the righteousness* of God, and soe become (through grace,) to be everlastingly blessed ^{2. Cor. 5.} with him, as the Apostle speaketh to the churches, of ^{21.} Gal. 3. 13. ^{14.} Corinth and Galassa.

And

And as for *Satans malice*, howsoever it be much, yet it neede to trouble but *little*, nay, not at all; for he is a *conquered*, and a *captivated* enemy, kild to our band, & throwne vnder our *feete*, (as we heard before) well he may *bate*, but he cannot *hurt* vs; he may *mallice*, but *mischeife* vs he cannot: What is *his power*, to the power of God that keepe's vs? what is his *subtilty*, to the *wisdom* of God that directs vs? hath it not most happily appeared that he hath beene *confounded* in all his *deuises* against vs; and we *comforted* more stedfastly; by that course, wherby he sought our *ruine eternally*? I thinke if we looke well into it, it is better with vs *now*, then it was, before he began to bring *evill* vpon vs. And what is (*now*) left of him, but the bare *shadow*, or *outside* of an *adversary*, in regard of that he *was*, when he had power not only to *tempt*, but to *overturne* vs; but now he can only *tempt* vs, we (in our Christ) can *overturne* him.

Let vs not then (*like fooles*) feare, or discomfort our selves, or suffer others to disquiet vs with things of no *consequence*, in this our *commerce* with our God. Say, our *ships*, be *brittle*, suppose our *passage* be *boyterious*; admit what we *carry*, be *corrupt*; what is all this; when we further consider, that we have an *omnipotent Pilot*, that can make our *vessell* *steele*, the *sea* *quiet*; and change our *commodities* into *better* condition: The living God both *can doe*, and hath promised that he *will doe*, all this: & the more to assure vs of soe much, it pleaseth him to utter and expresse his *consolations* vnto vs; in *sea-faring mens* *tearmes*, speaking to vs, as vnto

Isai. 54. 11 men in *sea dangers*, saying [*Oh thou afflicted & tossed*
cap. 43. 2. *with tempest &c.*] & againe, [*When thou passest through*
the water I will be with thee, that the floods shall not
drawe

drawne thee]; & by the apostle, he further tells vs what good *ground-table* we have, to wit, an *anchor*, *sure* and *steadfast*] that cannot *faile* vs: though therefore some *Heb. 6. 19* seeming danger may shew it self, yet assured danger there is none: something may *appeare* very *perilous* to our flesh and blood, to our frailty, ignorance, and infidelity, as the *growne sea*, and the *great billow*, doth to *fresh water soldiers*, who start and shrink at every *wave*: but to our faith, and that power of grace given vs of God, nothing can *proove terrible*, howsoever it *appeare*. We have a God that can *doe whatsoever he will*, and hath *power* at his *pleasure*, to *imploy* for our best good, and will *doe* by that *power*, according to his *pleasure*, whatsoever may any way redounde to the happiness of their hearts, who *vehemently* desire to *deale* with him. Vpon him, and vpon his *power* and *favor* we depend, *fearing* no *present*, or *future* *perill*, in anything appertayning to his kingdom, and those *affayres* that concerne the same. And in this resolution let all Gods saints set vp their rest for ever,

For there is a crew of vpstart **TRADERS**, or rather **INTRVDERS**, I meane *Papists*, & *Arminians* (I joyne them together, though the one be much *yonger* then the other, yet are both, late *novices* in respect of the ancient truth of God) who *meddle*, (or rather *Reddle*) in Gods *merchandise*, and tell men, that there is great *hazzard*, and *adventure* borne in this blessed trade, and no such manifest and vndoubted security, as we plead, but danger of being *bankrupt*, & falling in *Grace*, in falling finally from it, and no *certaintie* of being blessed in *Glory*, or assurance of being received into it.

Concerning these, I am perswaded *truly*, they
speake

speake as they thinke, and (I thinke,) they *finde themselves*, as they *speake to others*, for not being made free of the fellowship of Gods faithfull ones, the truth not having yet made them free of the communion and corporation of the true *saints*; I can see noe reason, (seeing they wilbe, INTERLOPING, in Error) but they should *mistrust* danger, and *meete* with it too, and not enjoy the *gracious* previledgis, and these most beneficiall *immunities* of that *society*, wherof they are not. And seeing they are not *members united*, but *monsters annexed* therevnto, why should they goe vpon as *sure grounds* as Gods owne doe. Especially seeing they will not make God, soe good a *matter*, or his *factors*, soe good *merchants*, as they grant the *Diuill* to be, for they confesse that all that deale for him, are sure enough of *damnation*, but of those that are *agents* for the Lord, it may be doubted of their *salvation*, yea it is presumption, to rest infallibly vpon it; which if they spake, & intended only of *themselves*, I could soone put it into *my creede*, but being (as they meane it) vniuersally true of the *very elect*, what man (having the *faith of Gods elect*, in him) can beleeve it?

Some also there are among the multitude of our ignorant & vulgar *Protestants*, who being neither well *persuaded*, nor at all *experienced*, in the light, and power of this truth, thinke it something *worth the most*, for any man to secure his owne soule of his eternall *salvation*; oh, say they, you must *not presume*, but have a *good hope*, that all shalbe well, it is *too much* to say *more*. And is it soe *indeed*? why then there is noe more *safer*, or *safer* holt, of heavens everlasting *treasures*, then of the temporary *vanities* of the world, for a man may say soe much of them; it is not sin, to *hope* that such a
a ship

ship shall come safely to her port; and may noe more be sayd of the *immutable things of God*, then of the *worldes moouables*, which have soe many waies, and meanes, to *miscarry*? Are your conceits soe *grosse, & confused*, that they can put *no difference* (nor vnderstand the difference, *Christ himselfe bash* put) betweene the things *that perish*, and those that *cannot perish*? is it all one, to trade with *God*, and *man*, in *heauen*, and in *earth*; in *fading*, *corruptible*, and *transitory trash*, and in that *enduring substance*, which will outlast, both *heaven* and *earth*? How prejudiciall are these *foolish sayings* to his *wisdomes*, who evermore make's it a property incommunicable, a prerogative *royall*, to spirituall things to be *firme* and not *fading*; and labour's (*here vpon*) to *Wynn* our harts vnto them, vpon this consideration, that they are soe *certaine*, & *sure*; & to *weane*, vs from all things here below, because they are soe *bristle*, and *unsounde*? How apparantly, opposite is this speech to that of the *Apostle*, who tell's vs, that he was perswaded (and that throughly) that *Neither life, nor death, nor angells, nor principall's, yes, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature*, (if any other could be conceited) *could separate him from the loue of the Lord Iesus*, in whome he saith, (not only of himself) but of *all the elect* of *God*, that weare made *more then conquerours*, through him that *loued vs*, and in this especially shewed his loue vnto vs, that he vnderwent, the *brant* (& that most willingly) of whatsoever was *indeede* dangerous, and by soe doing, brought vs from vnder the mutable freedome of the first *Adam*, to be free from mutability, and miscarriage any more, vnting vs to himself, that (in the second *Adam*) we might be safe, and sounde, *for ever*.

Rom. 8.
38. 36.

ver. 37.

E Let

Note.

Let this be *remembered* of vs, and *magnified* by vs, in him our Lord who hath done soe great things for vs, as to make vs (*in this thing*) to be more *happy*, then he, who was created in absolute *happines*: he was *without sin*, yet *not sure*, we are *sure*, *though* not without *sin*; his *perfection* (*without Christ*) made him not free from *mutability*, & we (*by Christ*) are *immutable*, notwithstanding all our *imperfections*. Soe, now we trade vpon *better*, (that is vpon *surer*) tearmes then he did, we cannot be soe *innocent*, of *evil*, but we are more *absolute* in *good*, then he was: he no sooner began to deale with God, but he *broke* straight; we are secured from the first instant of our beginning, that we shall *never* finally *faile*.

Thus we see, this is the *first* *priveledg* of the *first* sort, wich your *merchandise* hath, & Gods hath *not*. ADVENTURES are EVILS, and therefore they are not incident to *this* trade, though to *yours* they be.

But this is but the *first*, and the beginning of the benefit of this trade, let vs looke further for more encouragement to this celestiall *commerce*, and the further we goe, the more good shall we still be sure to see. Set we then towards a *second*, and that is this.

2.
Prive-
ledg.

That as there is no *hassarde* in this heavenly trade, but all come's safe to hand, soe neither is it possible to make a *bad debt*, in all that we deale for.

Noe BAD DEBTS can be made in this busines, nay, no debts can be made which are not *exceeding good*, yea better, then all the *ready money* in the worlde, if it were all due to *one man*.

And this helps on the *happines* of the former, for it all should come well, arrive safely, and we should (when it hath passed all *sea dangers*) endanger it our selves, in *selling* it, to vntrusty *buyers*, who should not

pay currantly, where were the comfort of the former safety? where were the future benefit of the commodity?

But if a man have it in sure possession, and sell it to such as will make sure payment, then is he happy, and hath his hearts desire.

And here it is soe, and it cannot be otherwise; for why? who doe we trust in all we trade for? even HE alone is trusted, whose payment cannot be mistrusted: we trust none but GOD, to whome we should be guilty of fearfull blasphemy, if we should harbour in our hearts, one jealous, or suspicious thought of inconstancy, (he being one [whose compassions cannot faile]), None but the Lord is our Debtor in the managing of this busines: *Lam. 3. 22* he who is rich in mercy, Lord over all, rich vnto all, able enough to pay; and as willing as he is able, to give vs content, nay (beyond that) more then we can aske, nay (beyond that too,) more then we can receive.

We heard what al sufficient security he hath given vs, by himself, by his son, by his spirit, by his word, by his oath, by all, (& more then all) that we could demaunde, or desire, to satisfy vs. We all know, there can be no bad debt, if the debtor be good, how then is there a possibility of any to be founde here, seing we trust nothing vpon any, but vpon him, vpon whome (we say) we put all our trust: who although he by not (be any right that we can clayme, or challege) a debtor to any man, as owing any thing (by due) to his creature, but (contrariwise) that all the world are debtors to him, and owe him infinite dues, which are simply unpayable (on our part) vnto him, if he should aske his owne: Yet it pleaseth him to make himself, and to manifest himself, to be our debtor, and of his owne mere grace, and love, he wilbe soe, assuring vs that we shall be paid to the full, yea, & that with vn-

speakeable *overplus*; and *advantage*.

Pr. 16. 17 He is content it should be sayd we lend unto him,
 [He that is mercifull to the poore, lendeth unto the Lord]
 and that he wilbe our paymaster, [and the Lord shall re-
 pay unto him what soever he layeth out] And the payment
 he make's, the satisfaction and contentment he gives,
 is *such*, and soe excellent, as would (if we well under-
 stood it) make vs ever more desire to have him more,
 and more, in our debts; happy is that man that hath, or
 can have, most debts standing out with God; the more;
 the better, he that is deeper in, is vndoubtedly most
 happy: and that for one speciall, and remarkable rea-
 son, worthy of everlasting remembrance and obser-
 vation, and that is this. That to whome soever he once
 makes payment; those men are made for ever. They
 shall never neede to trade more, who once are satis-
 fied by this debitor, and the debt is as sure as himself is,
 who is the debitor: it is not more certain that he is in
 heaven, then, that all (to whome he makes himself
 indebted) shall receive, plenary, and perfect payment;
 beyond all that can be either demanded, desired, or
 received: his satisfaction is soe superabundant, that we
 are not capable of the fullnes thereof.

All bad debts come by trusting the world, or the
 Divell, or our selves, either overmuch, or at all; for not
 one of them is worthy of any confidence; they are all
 three, soe farre from infallibylty, that they who most
 depend vpon them, shall finde nothing but vanity &
 deceit in them. But he that relyeth vpon the living
 Lord, as sure as the Lord liues, that man shalbe satisfied.

Note. There, are few men to whome he is debitor, but he
 paye's them double, and more, and more, and more, and
 more, and more, and more, and more, and more, and more,
 something they have in hand, they are presently
 payd

payd in part, even in this world; and in such a time as he knowe's may doe them most good, and with such either inward, or outward comforts (or it may be, some of both sorts,) as they are most fit to receive, and shalbe most happy to haue. *Something* is still resting to them, and remayneth to be received in heaven; and that is the infinite glory, blisse, and felicity, which Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob, & the blessed Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, and those innumerable spirits of just and perfect men, doe enjoy, with all whome we shall sit downe in that kindome, and beholde the Lord of life, and king of glory, face to face, and partake those incomprehensible happineses, which are reserved for vs (with them) there.

The least the Lord doth render to vs, (even of these baser blessings) is more satisfaction then we have, (or can have) right vnto; but the best, (whether it be of grace or of glory) doth exceede not only our right, but even our thoughts also. And hence it is, that we are (with for good reason) for often invited, and incited by the holy Ghost, to Trust in the Lord] yea, [to trust perfectly in him] to cast all our cares vpon him: to, [commit both our wayes and our selues, to him] and we are also tolde that [it is better to trust him then princes]: and yet we would thinke our debt good, and our maney sure, if a Prince were to be our paymaster; well, saith David, it is better to trust in the Lord, then in Prince. he speakes it wise, that we may know he is well advised, in it, and well assured of it, and to hartten vs here vnto, he vndertake's we shall never be confounded, or ashamed of our affiance in the Lord, who neuer forgeth, *Heb. 13. 5* nor forsaketh any one that truly repositeth his trust in him.

Feb. 10.

in him, and therefore would not have vs cast away our confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. And none could speake this better then they that have tryed it, as both David, and Paul, & other of Gods saints have done, & in like manner shall all saints doe: if they can finde occasion to doe soe, they shalbe sure to have occasion to say soe.

With men, it is good (yea, be the men never soe good, and sufficient) to get in debts; because their state is mutable, their wealth, or their will, mooveable, and it may quickly come to passe that they cannot, or will not pay, but with the Lord, it is good to get him into our debt; for the longer it run's, the larger shall our reward be, (if not before) yet at the resurrection of the iust, we shalbe sure to have it to the full, yea, (as was noted before) infinitely, farre beyond all fullnes.

Note.

Againe (which is yet more, and therefore to be more marked of vs) his payment, shall not rest only in our selues, the whole benefit of it shall not be ours alone, but it shall extende it self, and reach to our posterity also; and this is much more then any man will doe at any time, but noe more then God will doe at all times, having protested his favour & respect to a thousand generations of them that loue him, & tolde vs (many a time) how well many have fared for their fathers sakes [The righteous is mercifull &c] (saith David) & his seede enjoyeth the blessing] and againe [Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord] &c [his seede shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of the iust shalbe blessed].

It is enough with men, and as much as either law, or conscience, doth require and commaund, that a man pay to one, if the debt be due to the father, (and duly discharged) the credditor needs not conferre any thing

thing vpon the *childe*, being no way bound to pay *one debt*, to more then *one party*, but God wilbe *superabundant* in what he doth, no mā shalbe such a *paymaester* as he is, for beside the full, yea infinite comfort, & contentment that the *father* shall receive, or hath received, the *child* shall also reape some good thing from God, because he was debtor to his *father*. *The Lord was never in debted to any one, but he payd more then one*; as the scriptures doe most abundantly testify.

Againe, wheras among men there can be noe possibility of a *bad debt* to be made, but the same must arise, either out of the *ability*, or *honesty*, of the *debtor*, that decayeth in *either*, or *both*, we may be the more certainly assured, that as in this *merchandise* there is none, *soe*, neither can there be any, because this God whome we *only* and *wholy* trust, who is to be blessed for ever, cannot fayle in *either* of these. God is the *only debtor* here, he *make's* himself *soe*, what hart of any man (vnlesse of an *infidell*, *atheist*, or *pagan*) can conceit, in the Lord, a possibility of *want*, *in power* or *truth*, or that he should be any way incident to faile, in *favour*, or in *faithfullnes*? Can it enter into the soule of any man, or may a thought herof have any place, and entertayment with a *Christian*, that he that is *above*, should *bankrupt*, either by *necessity*, or any other *meanes*? It were a most *impious*, & *prodigious* apprehension. How should he want *ability*, in whome is all *infinity*, yea and all *full infinitenes*, also? How should he want *truth* or *faithfullnes*, to keepe *such* with vs, whose honour it is, (and ever hath bene) to holde with all, who ever dealt with him, whose testimonies are *very sure*, yea *most sure*, and never say ling, noe not in any *one*, to whome (in the *least thing*) he was ever pleased to engage himself.

Is

Gen. 17.

Is he not [God all] sufficient as he tolde Abraham? yea, he who hath all, all sufficientnesse, in him? the whole world can witnes this (most truly) as they are creatures: and millions of men (more comfortably) as they are Christians. He never did, as many men doe, run more in debt, then they are worth, or have where with to pay: his debts are not of any necessity, as (most mens are), but he wil be a debtor only to whome he pleaseth, and none els; and those to whome he is soe, shall well see he doth not, nor cannot disapoint them.

For why? (consider I pray you) most men haue power to make debts, and to get in with many, but what man can make money to get out, & give satisfaction withall: if that were also in every mans power, who would be arrested, imprisoned, discredited, and troubled for non-payment? he were a man worthy of noe pity, but of all extremity, that having a myne, & a myne, would yet lye by it, for debt: why the Lord our God, he hath all this, he hath as much power to get out of debt, as pleasure to get in, rather then any shall faile, he can create new comforts, and myne new mercyes, if the fullnes of those (already being) should faile: it is easy with him to make as many worlds, as there are creatures in the world that is made; no, no, the Lord hath tyed himself by such an indissoluble band, that there can be no cause, (nay no colour) of suspition of any feare hereof saying [Once haue
psa. 89. 35 I sworne that I will not fayle.] The heavens must want their fullnes: the earth, the ayre, the sea, their abundance; all worlds must be emptied; ere the least of those that rely vpon him shall goe away disappointed: He hath spoken, & will not depart from it (saith David), he never went from his word yet: all his words are faithful, and true, for he is *amen, the true & faithful witness* he is God
who

who cannot lye, as we have heard enough before: his word being *most true*, himself *more*, even *truer* it self, what place is left for any probability, of *doubtfulness*, *difficultie*, or *fear*, in our hearts?

Now then, seeing all ill debts, come *some* of these wayes, and *none* of these, are any way incident to the Lord, they that trade here, may well, and truly say, (even out of *happy experience*) that *this merchandise* is (in *this respect*) farre better then the *merchandise of Gold or silver*, because here is no occasion of *discomfort* to any *creditor*, in any debt he hath made, but the same is *good*, and *certain*, he is sure to have it, with wonderfull *advantage* & benefit. God is *capable* of no *necessity*: nor *culpable* of any *fraudulency*, he cannot *over-trade* himself, or be *over-scene* in any thing he dealeth with us for; how then should any thing, be *unsure*? Who here among men that mourneth not to see the *lamentable catalogues* that come dayly both of *bad debts*, and *debtors*? I say of *both*, for every *bad debt*, doth not argue a *bad debtor*, the Lord may lay his hand vpon some, and disable them to satisfy, where they have received, which thing they would most willingly doe, were it in their *power*, and it doth not a little *perplex* them that it is not. The *debt* (in this case) may be *bad*, but soe is not the *debtor*, who not being any whit lesse *honest in hart*, but more *poore in estate*, (and that by the hand of God) cannot be layd to be *bad*, vnlesse it be in the construction of those *base earth-wormes*, who make the world their cheifest good, hating *poverty*, as men doe *sheevey*. These (as wee sayd before) are the true *objects* of Gods compassion, & *mans* comiseration, and he hath no *Christian hart*, who lendeth not a hand (so farre as he may) to *lift* vp such, as the Lord hath

thus humbled. But for others, who are truly called *Bad debtors*, from whom God hath not taken *sufficiency of means*, but the *Devell* hath rob'd them of *honesty of minde*, to retayne that money to enrich themselves, which others ought, (by vnderstandable right) to receiue from them; what should I say, but what the *Apostle* once sayd, [*Their money perish with them*], & they with their money, who thus *guine it*, & *retayne it*: yea, without *repentance to God*, and *restitution to men*, they shall both surely perish; for the curse, (even the *consuming* curse) of God, cleaveth both to it, and them.

The catalogue of these caytiffes increaseth daily, it is long enough (I thinke) to reach from hence to hell, whereinto they shall all be cast, and be accursed for ever, who vpon *pretended poverty* of their owne, doe really rob, & impoverish many. The *Devell* himself was never so bad as to make himself worse then he is, as he hath taught these *vile varlets* to doe: it is his manner many times, to make himself better then he is, (for his advantage) but never worse; but these wretches, will sayne to be *poore*, and *penurious*, even in despite of God, and his good providence, who hath taken nothing from them, but *giuen them enough* to give men their owne, which because they will not doe; he hath pleased to give them over to this *new-founde*, & most *notorious* villany, that their *rayle* should be like the *dragons*, to draw soe many downe, as must fall by their rising.

But of all those that ever had to doe with God in this *merchandise*, can one be named (in the whole worlde, or any age, or time thereof) whome he sayled fully to satisfy according to *promise*, and *kindnes* too. All the *Devells* in hell cannot instance any one; soe exact & most absolute, hath the *falsity* of God ever beene to all

to all his, in all things. Sooner shall the *sun* faile to give vs *light*, and the *day* to follow the *nights*, then our God (*see he wilke our debt or*) will faile vs one jot: God himself hath sayd it, we may therefore *safely* beleene it, and with *joy* settle our harts vpon it.

If we *should*, (nay if we *could*), survey the *receipts* of Gods servants, and take knowledge, what they themselves have *freely* confessed, *freely* to have received, it would soone appeare, that they have had more then they can *fully* acknowledge, and beene made partakers of more then they could aske, or thinke, and that *Eph 3.20.* not a *little*, but *abundantly*, yea exceeding abundantly too, as the *Apostle* witnesseth. Nay if we enter *seriously*, and search *narrowly*, into our selves, we could not but confesse our *receipts* of kindnes, and comfort from God, to be *many* more thē we can *number*, or account. But we take *too little* notice (which is our *great sin*) of what God doth *cast vpon* vs, that we are not able (as we ought) to *cast it vp*, & *feelingly* to confesse it, either vnto the Lord, for the *lauding* of his name, or to men, to *leade* them on, to the sounde comfort, and benefit of this confidence.

And this is the *second* euill, incident to your *merchandise*, but exempted from this. Let vs come to enquire ter a *third*.

Thirdly, in this *merchandise*, there are **NOE BAD 3. Proverbs.**
COMMODITIES: *nothing* ill conditioned, *nothing* ledg that is counterfeited, or sophisticated, or that will shrinke in any measure, but all that comes to this *deare*, is *certain*, *merchandise*, and as it ought to be, in every respect.

Noe man neede feare, either *clash*, or *colour*, *lengths* or *breadths*, *matter* or *making*, all is true, sufficient and

without any fault, or exception.

And this you may well, and willingly beleue, if you doe but remember what is the only commodity in request here, even [GRACE] for saith our text, the *merchandise* [THEREOF] that is, of *wisdom* and *understanding*, (named before,) and comprehending all *graces* vnder them. *This*, and *this* alone, is *salable* here, *this* (of it self) take's vp the *whole trade*, all the *doings*, is for this *one* thing, even for *Grace*, a commodity which is *originally*, and *infinitely* seated in God himself, and *graciously* dispenced vnto vs, according to that measure therof, wherof we are most *capable*, and wherin we may be most meete and able to honour *him*, who is the *fountayne* of the same.

And how is it possible, that any of this should not be *exceeding good*, when it flowes from the *Lord himself*, & by him, is derived, & communicated to vs, through the purchase of *Christ*, by the power of the *holy ghost*: shall we thinke that

either, this *fountayne* can yeelde any thing that is *corrupt*, or, that *Christ* would buy that for vs which were *naught*.

or that the *holy ghost* would convey any thing, to vs which is not *good*?

Farre be all such *impious*, and *vnholly* apprehensions from vs, as (at once) to *blame*, yea to *shame*, the *blessed trinity*, & to lay any *imputation*, of *falsehood* vpon God the *father*, or of *foolishnes*, vpon God the *son*, or of *vanity* vpon the *holy ghost*: all which (yet) were most true, if any *Grace* that came from God were *vnfounde*. Soe that in this trade there is no trash, or ill conditioned commodity, offered to any.

But

But in yours is much, yea, (if yours, and all mens generall complaints be true) *soo much*, he must be *some-body* that most foe farre see into a thing that he may not be deceived *now dayes*, inasmuch as many are growne from being CRAFTY MASTERS, to be MASTERS OF CRAFTY and to liue, and gaine more by their wits, in making a false commodity, then ever they did by the worth of a true, studdying how they may, yet denying that they doe, deceiue. For that is the manner of all Satans art-men, that their practise goes before their profession in euill, but in good, their profession goes not only before practise, but without it also, because practise never soloues. In diabolicall dealings they euer practise, seldome professe; in diuine affayres, they euer professe, seldome, nay never practise.

And as much of your bad ware is foe cunningly, & artificially handled, that it is not, nor cannot be easily discerned, but is taken, (or rather mistaken) for good. Soe is it in this merchandise, (by Satans subtilty, and mens simplicity) come to passe, that many are deceived with the appearance of grace, where the substance is not. The apostle tell's vs that *[Great is the mystery of Godlines]* and so indeede it is, & soe great for vs to know & learne as we ought: and as true it is, that great is the mystery of Vngodlines (though nothing so great as the other) yet too great for vs to know, and shun as we should. Hypocrisy is spun with a fyne thread, and made as fayre as is possible, to deceive the simple: and it doth indeede delude the greatest part of the christian worlde, misleading most men, and making them to thinke they haue saving, whereas (in truth) they haue naught but deceiuing Grace, that is, that which they thought was true grace, but were deceived by it.

Howbeit